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Lowell A. Martin - Consultant

Jane Ritter - Research Associate

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INTRODUCTION

In a meeting with the Library Commission on June 3, 1981, Mayor Feinstein directed the Library to conduct a study of its branch-library program. Included in the statement were the following remarks:

"... in some areas of the City we have as many as five libraries serving essentially the same clientele. The question arises: Could we have less in that area? ... Is it possible to expand service hours in certain library branches or to expand book collections in certain libraries so that we might be able to provide better services than we are doing now?"

In a communication to the Commission dated November 30, 1981, the Mayor succinctly stated the purpose of the proposed study to be: "to develop a library system that meets the increasing demands with fewer dollars."

The present Report is the outgrowth of that directive. The scope of the study has been broadened to include the Main Library as well as the branches, because the two parts of the Library are interconnected and because the central unit displays weaknesses that should be corrected. However, this is not a detailed examination of methods and procedures; it is a study of policies, priorities, and structure.

The present Report sets forth a Plan of Library Development for the 1980's. It is the result of a planning process engaged in by library officials and staff, Friends of the Library, and members of the public. The outside consultant really served as a catalyst to pull together divergent but fundamentally similar views. A kind of unwritten plan has existed; the present document serves essentially to set it down.

Planning for the San Francisco Public Library must start from the hard reality of limited financial support. The purchasing power of the Library in the current fiscal year, 1981-82, is 20 percent less than it was in 1979-80, taking inflation into account. The Plan presented in this Report takes account of the financial situation in San Francisco and seeks to be as cost effective as possible.

At the same time the Plan rests on the belief that people need and expect access to the record of knowledge, in order to carry out their business, family, civic, cultural and personal lives. This applies to the youngster entering the world of reading, to the student preparing a paper, to the job applicant seeking employment information, to the mother stretching the family budget, to the business-person consulting financial and marketing data before making a

I. GENERAL ENVIRONMENT FOR
A PLAN OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

The San Francisco Public Library, as a service agency supported by public funds, is a product of the social and economic characteristics of the area it serves. These general characteristics must be taken into account in devising any Plan of Library Development -- the service program must fit San Francisco.

It is therefore worth summarizing the various factors in order to establish the environment in which the Library has functioned and will function in the next decade. This is by no means a comprehensive treatise on social trends in San Francisco, but simply a brief review of those factors that relate most directly to the Library.

People to be Served

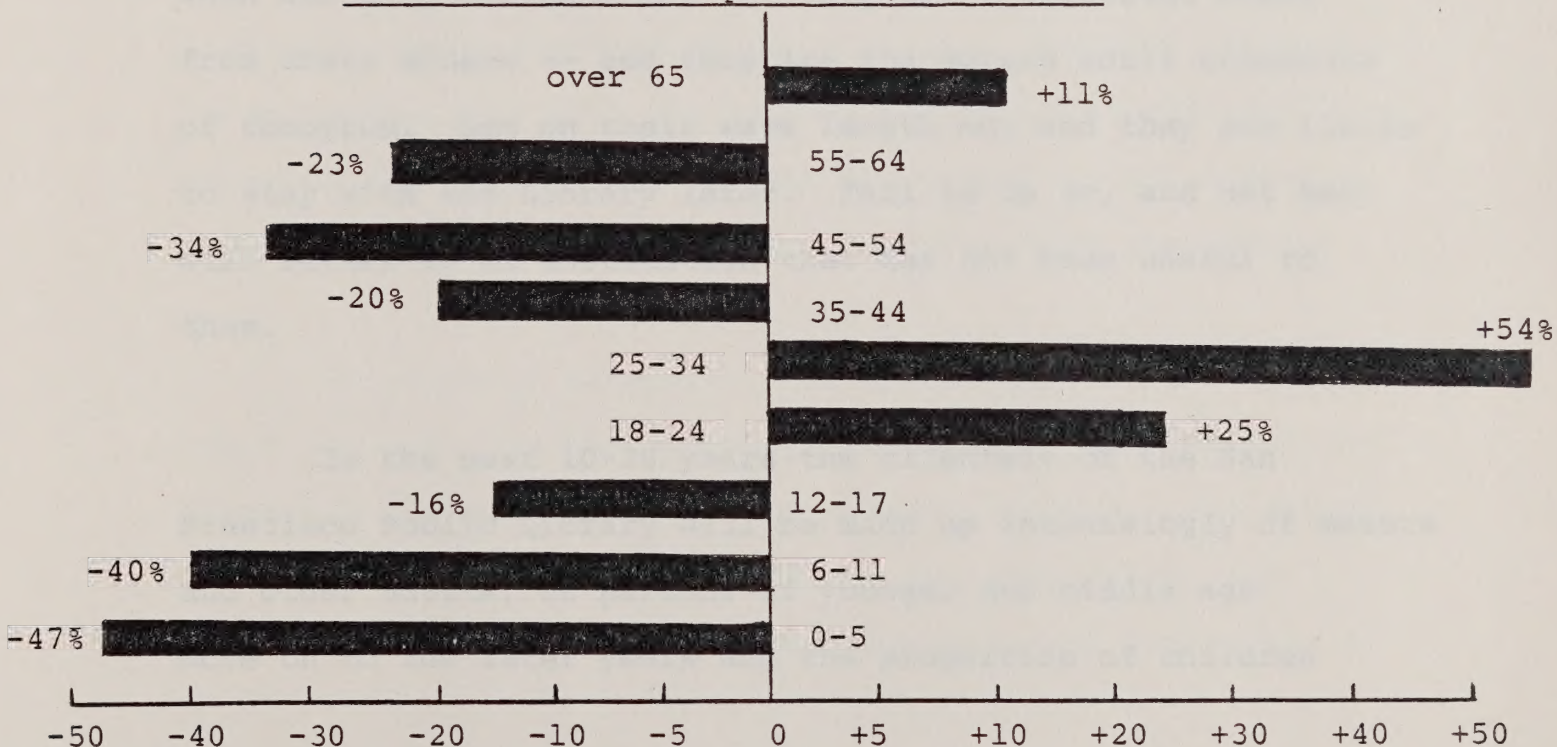
The population of San Francisco decreased by 3 percent from 1960 to 1970 and by an additional 5 percent from 1970 to 1980. Continuing small decreases can be expected in the next decade or two, unless services and neighborhoods deteriorate and drive people out, in which case the decline will accelerate.

Barring this undesirable development, the San Francisco Public Library will continue to serve well over 600,000 people within the City at least until the year 2000.

But this population has been changing, and will continue to change, in ways that affect library service. The greatest population decreases have been in children (there are half as many youngsters 0-5 today as in 1960) and in adults 35 to 60 years of age. On the other hand, there has been a substantial increase in the 18-35 group and a moderate increase in those over 60.

Figure 1

Proportional Changes in Age
of San Francisco Population, 1960-1980



Sources: 1960 U. S. Census, 1980 U. S. Census.

The drop in number of children should not lead to a proportional decrease in service to the young generation. Library service cannot be planned by numbers alone. Children's service has been particularly effective -- primarily because its purpose is clear and defined -- and is much needed not only by youngsters who are ready readers but also by children from families without a tradition of books and of the English language.

The predominant potential clientele of the Library at present is adults of younger years, individuals becoming established in their careers, their family life, and their community affiliations. Librarians would be wise to keep the twenty-year olds and the thirty-year olds clearly in focus when building collections, for they are a different breed from their elders -- and they are the mature adult clientele of tomorrow. Get on their wave length now and they are likely to stay with the Library later. Fail to do so, and not many will return to an institution that has not been useful to them.

In the next 10-20 years the clientele of the San Francisco Public Library will be made up increasingly of mature and older adults, as persons of younger and middle age move on to the later years and the proportion of children

remains small. The number of persons age 65 and older in the City is now over 100,000, and this number will increase in the period ahead. In many branch libraries senior citizens are already the most evident of the users in the adult sections. Librarians should go out of their way to relate to this group as they already have to children -- and this takes a little extra effort because oldsters do not respond as readily as youngsters.

The proportion of single and non-family households is unusually high in San Francisco. It is estimated that the number of dwelling units occupied by single persons is one-third of the total (SPUR REPORT No. 180, December, 1981, p. 3). By and large this group is above-average in both education and income, characteristics that are usually associated with substantial library use. They are likely to be individuals with specialized and sophisticated information needs and reading tastes, who expect a good quality of library service or they will turn away from the agency.

In terms of language, SFPL seeks to serve two distinct publics, one English-speaking and the other Asians and Hispanics for whom English is a second language. The second group now numbers over one-third of the population, and is growing. They are younger on the average, and have a higher

birth rate, so that they will constitute an even larger proportion in the next years. The largest contingent is made up of Asians and Pacific Islanders (147,426 individuals, up by 153 percent since 1960 and now constituting 21.7 percent of the City's population).

The converse of this growth of various ethnic groups is the decline of the white population. San Francisco had 604,000 white residents in 1960; it has 349,000 today. A characteristic of the City is the number of sections in which people of different backgrounds live in integrated communities, although there are some sections that are predominantly white, black, Hispanic or Asian.

Serving a diversified population is more demanding and more costly than serving a unified clientele. The split between a quite young adult population on the one side and a quite old group on the other poses one such challenge, for reading motives and interests are not the same. Similarly, differences in language backgrounds require distinctly different collections and staff groups, including librarians with language skills. SFPL cannot offer one standard program but must seek to be several kinds of libraries.

Economic Base

The economy of San Francisco remains healthy despite the current recession, and the standard of living is high. Economic growth is based on commercial development and office-based employment, supplemented by tourism.

"Since the beginning of 1980, the amount of office space built, in construction, and under review in San Francisco exceeds 20 million square feet. This is greater than the total amount built during the preceding decade." (SPUR REPORT No. 180, December, 1981, p. 1).

San Francisco is well into the type of service economy -- centered around financial, professional, consultative, and retail activities (rather than manufacturing and distribution) -- which will characterize the next two decades or more, and which should keep the City vital over this period.

As to the cost of living quarters, San Francisco is described as "... the most expensive housing market in the country." (New York Times, February 6, 1982, p. 7). The City also ranks high in per capita income, second or third in the United States according to several government compilations. At the same time San Francisco has a definite contingent of Asian, Hispanic and Black families struggling to

find their place in this thriving economy, and several working-class neighborhoods occupied by individuals in construction and semi-skilled jobs. In very broad terms, two-thirds of the population is doing very well, while one-third reflects the American aim of moving out of a marginal economic status.

San Francisco lives by its commerce and service industries, and these enterprises live by information, which is the commodity delivered by the Library. Data is needed both for long-term planning and for short-term decisions. The executive, professional, technical and support workers attracted by corporate and service enterprises tend to be above average in education and have diversified reading and communication tastes, a population that in its nonworking life seeks out libraries. Thus both for business and personal reasons this is a city that needs adequate library service.

There has been some loss in industry from the City -- printing plants for example. This has not been enough to seriously affect the economy, but it has caused dislocation among some blue-collar workers. Unless steps are taken this can result in pockets of unemployment and then in turn in disorganization in some neighborhoods. One practical step than can be taken is to concentrate library service

in such sections on job information, employment retraining materials, and data about educational opportunities.

Overall the economic base is thriving and expanding, despite some current setbacks. However, the city government has only limited access to these resources for tax purposes, because of restrictions on property tax rates passed by the voters of the State in 1978. On the average, property owners now pay half the taxes that prevailed earlier (one wonders if they meant library service when they passed Proposition 13). For a time grants from a state surplus helped to bridge the gap, but this has been exhausted. The next period will be a time of prosperity for private enterprise in San Francisco and a time of austerity for all aspects of local government.

The standard of private life in San Francisco remains high, but the standard of public life is slipping, and the Public Library -- as we will see -- is one example of this. Theoretically the financial base is there to support adequate and even distinguished library service, but actually the dollars are not in hand with which to accomplish this.

Redevelopment and Neighborhood Organization

Despite the fact that San Francisco has relatively few run-down neighborhoods, a substantial redevelopment program is under way -- the City is heading off deterioration before it takes root. Examples now well-completed are Western Addition (4,653 housing units) and Diamond Heights (325 acres). The 1981 report of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency lists nine additional projects "in execution."

Perhaps more than most U.S. cities, San Francisco may be able to bring a considerable number of residents to the central area by means of high-rise residential construction. The combination of business, civic, cultural and entertainment activities makes for an unusually attractive urban setting. The process will be accelerated by the Planning Commission policy of requiring commercial developers to participate in residential housing for the workers their buildings will attract. Already the Golden Gateway project stands adjacent to the Embarcadero office complex. Within two blocks of the Main Library, Opera Plaza -- "a dynamic new neighborhood" -- will open in 1982. These and other developments may be "neighborhoods" in some respects, but they lack library facilities, which will have to be included in plans for the main unit of SFPL. The central area of

San Francisco by 1990 will look quite different not only in expansion of commercial facilities but also in expansion of residential facilities. Looking ahead, an additional branch library might be contemplated for South of Market. However, construction of a library building is very expensive, and a facility once established adds to operating costs. The preferable alternative is to build up a substantial circulating unit in the Main Building, which is adjacent to where the residential development in South of Market is likely to occur.

Notable among the projects underway is the Yerba Buena Development. Besides a convention center completed and a 700-room hotel under construction, some 2,800 dwelling units are to be built. This project in turn is likely to promote development in additional parts of the South of Market area, adjacent to the Main Library. Yerba Buena and related activity will dislocate present residents of the area, but some lower-income and elderly households are included in the plans.

San Francisco has been a city of neighborhoods and to some extent will remain so. However, it would be a mistake to think of local areas as static and unchanging. People are moving in and out of localities -- one example

is the considerable number of families of Asian background moving into the Richmond and Sunset areas; another example is the change occurring in the Outer Mission section (served by the Excelsior Branch) with the increasing number of Hispanic and Filipino families. Some gentrification is occurring, with higher rentals forcing out lower-income families. Young people are moving into older sections and rehabilitating homes. Some of the most closely-knit neighborhoods have distinctly older residents, which will result in change as they die or move away. In this whole process neighborhoods lose their identity to a degree and boundaries between localities become blurred. It would not be wise to base branch library service permanently on neighborhood groupings that are changing and in some cases fading.

Another implication of continuing population shifts is that concentrations of people of special backgrounds tend to become dispersed. Chinese appear in several communities well away from Chinatown, Japanese are located in several areas other than Japantown, Hispanics are moving south from the Mission district. It may still be sensible to locate special language collections in designated branch libraries (Chinese in the Chinatown Branch, Japanese at Western Addition, Spanish at Mission) which is the present pattern, but it should be recognized that the public for these resources

will be increasingly dispersed by 1990. In time the best location for special language collections will be the Main Library, even as it is the best location for special subject collections.

Metropolitan Setting

The Bay Area is now the fifth largest megalopolis in the United States, with over 5,000,000 residents; the immediate trading area is about half that size. San Francisco is the financial and cultural center of the area, drawing in several hundred thousand people on work days, markedly increasing the daytime population of the City.

Service to this large and populous nine-county metropolitan area is provided by 34 public libraries. As the largest of these agencies, SFPL draws users from all over the area and lends considerable numbers of books to other libraries (2,477 in 1981). In a genuine sense, the San Francisco Public Library serves as a resource center for the metropolitan area, and -- under the California state-wide library plan -- for all of Northern California. Only limited funds are provided from outside the City for these purposes, which means that San Francisco must meet costs for services that go to outside residents.

While research collections exist in the metropolitan area, notably at the University of California and Stanford University, there are relatively few within the City itself. SFPL plays only a modest role among these research collections and has relatively little contact with them.

There is a degree of coordination of plans and services among the libraries of the metropolitan area. BARC (Bay Area Reference Center, housed in SFPL but supported from federal funds) stands as a last resort for difficult reference questions originating within any of the nine library systems in Northern California. Closer to home, BALIS (Bay Area Library and Information System, maintained by state money), which SFPL joined recently, is developing interlibrary loan and other programs of joint action.

Together these various libraries and agencies constitute a network into which SFPL must fit. On the one hand, it should not seek to build up resources already in other collections, particularly research-level materials. On the other, it should not slip into services that should be provided by other institutions, particularly the elementary and secondary schools. The San Francisco Public Library has surprisingly little contact with and no working agreements either with the school systems or the colleges and universities.

The Library contributes more to BARC (in the form of space and of use of SFPL collections to answer questions) and to BALIS (in the form of materials loaned) than it receives in return. One direct way to right the balance is simply for the Library to make more use of these two agencies right at hand -- turning over some of its most difficult reference questions to BARC, and calling more on the BALIS inter-loan structure to get materials that it is unable to supply its users.

Public Perception of the Library

People in general do not think first of library facilities when considering public services. However, once safety and maintenance considerations are put aside, the public library has a surprisingly high place. City governments across the country have discovered this when trying to close branch libraries. Local libraries have come to be a symbol of what quality of neighborhood life cities are prepared to maintain.

The depth of public feeling is reflected in a written comment by a library user at Mission Branch. When confronted with a question form presenting several alternatives for reducing library costs, this individual responded:

"None of these options are acceptable. City libraries, fully staffed with adequate collections and hours, are basic to people who want to do more than watch TV and who cannot afford libraries of their own. This public service seems so basic it seems sacriligious to be discussing further reductions. Please-- this is a priority for people who are up-lifted in these very bad times by being able to read and learn."

Evidence of public support appears in active Friends groups. The 2,000-member Friends of the San Francisco Public Library is one of the most notable groups of its kind in the country. It engages in a variety of fund raising activities (book sales, lecture series, grant requests) and uses its resources to underwrite innovative projects, such as computerized information service within the Library, a sign program for the Main Building, and even the present planning study. Among other activities, the Friends staff an information desk in the Main Library with volunteers, and maintain a guide program for residents and visitors to the City.

Other support groups spring up when service is threatened. When the possibility arose recently of closing the Business Library, a group organized and is soliciting funds from private sources. When facilities did not keep pace with the needs of blind and physically-handicapped people, another Friends group organized to promote this service.

Library resources may not be as immediate a concern as safety in the streets, but they are perceived as important not only by those who directly benefit but also by those who have the general interest of community life at heart. This positive perception was evident in the 8,000 responses, from both users and non-users, to a city-wide study in 1977-78 (Library Services in San Francisco: Citizen Usage and Attitudes) and was confirmed in early 1982 in discussions with community groups over the City and in 1,200 question forms returned by library users in early 1982.

But all this has not made for a distinguished public library. By any standards of economic, cultural and community life, San Francisco is a great city. The same cannot be said of the San Francisco Public Library. The Library has followed behind, trying to catch up. This is not a phenomenon of the past few years, but goes back a half-century or more. The City Librarian from 1960 to 1967 is reputed to have "... pulled the San Francisco Public Library into the 20th Century." It is time now to get ready for the 21st Century.

Conclusion

The foregoing characteristics and trends in San Francisco

lead to the following broad outline of what the San Francisco Public Library must be in the 1980's, and which a Plan of Development must promote:

- a central reference and study facility for persons pursuing topics in some depth, as occurs in a city as diversified, vital and stimulating as San Francisco.
- a reading and cultural center for the increasing number of well-educated people moving to the central part of the City.
- an informational-educational institution for the many persons in the mainstream of American business, professional, and cultural life (two-thirds of the population), living in various parts of the City.
- an informational-educational agency for persons seeking to become established, but who -- because of limited formal education and/or limited facility in English -- are not adequately served by traditional library service (one-third of the population). This does not mean watered-down versions of regular community libraries, but local units specifically designed to meet the needs and traditions of the people served.

II. THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY TODAY

The present study was not commissioned as a detailed analysis of internal operations and staff performance of the San Francisco Public Library. The purpose is rather to prepare a Plan of Development for the next ten years, during which there will be limitations on funds. For this purpose it was necessary first to ascertain the general strengths and weaknesses of the Library at this time.

This assessment is set down in the present section. Here in general terms is the agency as it stands after a decade of inflationary pressures. Emphasis in this description is on problem areas, for it is these that must be dealt with in a Plan of Development. However, this critical tone should not obscure the fact that the San Francisco Public Library retains a considerable element of strength and that concerned administration and dedicated staff provide valuable service under unfavorable circumstances.

Use of the Library

The circulation of books from the San Francisco Public Library fell by 31.6 percent from 1960 to 1980. Most of the decline occurred in the 1970-1980 decade. There was a slight

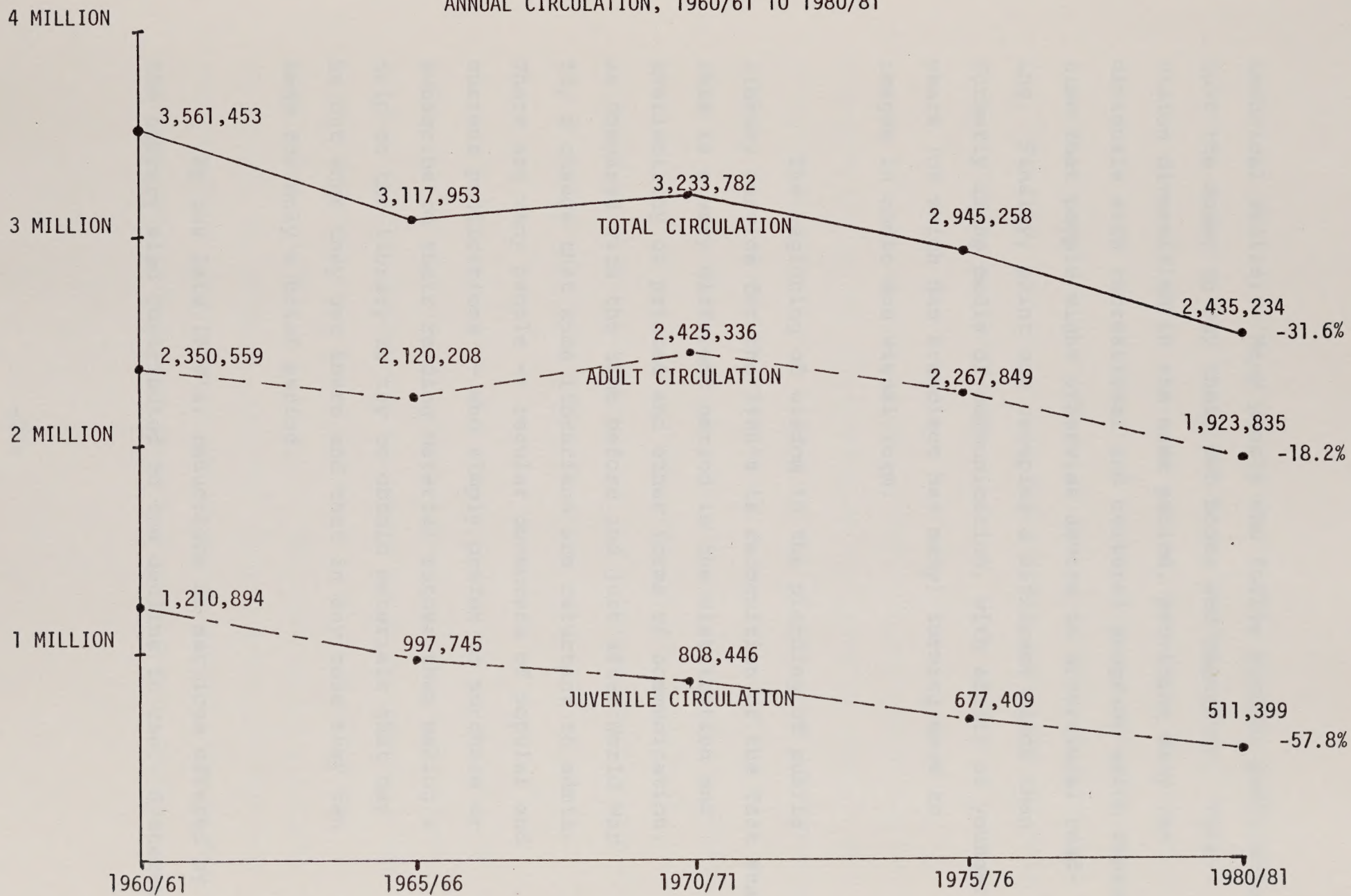
upturn in the last year, 1981.

Various factors account for the twenty-year decline. An eight percent decrease in the population of the City is a basic factor. Much of the population decrease was in the ranks of children, and the drop in library use was greatest in juvenile circulation. However, there was a decline of 20.7 percent in adult use from 1970 to 1980, even though the number of adults in San Francisco remained almost the same.

Also during the same decades, English-speaking families moved to the suburbs and were replaced by families in which English is the second language. This is true of close to one-third of San Franciscans; such individuals do not make as much use of a facility in which materials are predominantly in English. In time this deterrent on library use will be diminished as young people of Asian and Hispanic origin grow into American culture.

An additional underlying factor is that, in the period 1960-1980, books in paperback form became widely available in supermarkets, drugstores and other convenient sources, and the number of popular special-interest magazines proliferated (home interests, sports, entertainment, the arts, hobbies, crafts, nature and the outdoors, travel, science,

FIGURE 2
ANNUAL CIRCULATION, 1960/61 TO 1980/81



technical skills). Many people who follow popular publications have the money to buy their own books and magazines. Television diversified in the same period, providing many individuals with recreational and cultural programs which consume time that people might otherwise devote to diversional reading. Finally, print now occupies a different place than formerly among media of communication, with adults of younger years (of which San Francisco has many) turning more to images in audio and visual form.

The beginning of wisdom in the planning of public library service for the 1980's is recognition of the fact that this is a very different period in the distribution and availability of printed and other forms of communication, as compared with the time before and just after World War II, a change that some librarians are reluctant to admit. There are many people -- regular consumers of popular and current publications -- who simply prefer to purchase or subscribe to their reading material rather than making a trip to the library to try to obtain materials that may be out when they get there and that in any case they can keep for only a brief period.

By the late 1970's, reductions in services offered by the Library also contributed to the decline in use. System-wide,

hours of service were cut by 12.5 percent; no agency of the Library, neither the central unit or any branch is open on Sunday, and 11 branches are closed on Saturday. As inflation mounted during the decade, book funds were cut, so that total volumes added decreased from 104,256 in 1970/71 to 74,932 in 1980/81, resulting in a lower chance that users can actually find the material they seek.

Overall the San Francisco Public Library has a quite moderate per capita circulation of 3.5 items annually. The figures for other large libraries in the Bay Area are Alameda County, 5.3, Contra Costa County, 5.2, and Oakland Public Library, 4.6. Whatever the arguments in favor of the present structure of service (with, for example, its large number of branch libraries), the result is not a very high record of use as measured by borrowing of books.

In contrast with the downturn in home circulation of books, the number of informational and reference questions handled by the Library has increased by 19.3 percent in the last five years (accurate figures do not go back before that time). 1,275,666 inquiries were made in the past year, 55 percent for help in using the Library and 45 percent for information that was extracted by staff members from reference sources. Thus, while the demand for home use of popular

reading has decreased, the demand for data from the Library has increased. It should be noted that this response has occurred without any particular effort on the part of the Library to let people know that it is a source of current, practical, applied information. No verifiable prediction for future reference use can be made, but as the society grows more specialized and complex, a continuing increase in information demand can be expected, which the Public Library will handle to the extent that it is recognized as an accurate and unbiased source and has the required resources.

Putting together the downturn in circulation and the upturn in reference demand, it must be recognized that the function of the Library is changing. It is less of a supply agency and more of an information and reference agency. SFPL did not plan for or promote this shift -- it occurred as a result of changes in the society (wider availability of reading materials on the one hand and greater demand for information not otherwise available on the other). If the use trends of the past 20 years continue for the next two decades, the Library will be circulating no more than 1,750,000 books by the 1990's (down by one-half from the 3,561,453 figure of 1960), and will be handling at least 2,500,000 reference inquiries each year. This is a prospect with profound implications for library planning. If the Library were to

promote its information function -- for example, inquiries by telephone could be readily doubled by means of a modest publicity campaign -- the shift would be accelerated.

The various agencies of the San Francisco Public Library provide a wide variety of group activities, from story hours for children to film showings for adults, from lectures on investing to concerts of folk music. Over 600 events for adults and over 2,000 for children were conducted in the past year, with a total audience in excess of 70,000. Some of the group activities are closely related to books and other media possessed by the Library, but many have very little connection and are similar to events put on by churches, community centers, and schools. The question is whether the many group activities constitute efforts that contribute directly to the distinctive purpose or function of the Library, or whether they represent a random range of events of general current interest, a kind of getting on the bandwagon because various community organizations put on such events. Some of the group activities -- children's story hours, for example -- probably attract potential readers who may go on to become library users, but others appear to be events that happen to turn up because of the interest of some individual or group.

Main Library

The central unit of SFPL is housed in a monumental building that is not well planned for library service, that is not inviting for the user, that is difficult to use, and that is too small for the number of books held. Location is a full half-mile from the heavy-traffic commercial district, but location is central within the Civic Center area, there is considerable parking space, and rapid public transportation is nearby.

Intensive use is made of the space available in the building. The front lobby is crowded, corners of space are utilized, corridors hold books and displays and even tables. Behind the scenes the book stack area is jammed with materials on the shelves, on the windowsills, and on the floors.

Lack of attractiveness and lack of space are hard enough for the user to contend with, but difficulty in locating services and materials is even more frustrating -- particularly when practical measures are immediately at hand to correct the situation at least to some extent. The identification signs recently installed are an example of what can be done, but they are only a first step.

Staff members report that they lack time to help inquirers with complicated questions, but the Library takes few steps to aid searchers in helping themselves. There is no detailed listing in the main lobby of where materials are located on the hundreds of topics for which people come, there is no floor plan which users can carry to help find their way, there are no sheets or folders describing the various departments. The main card catalog and the departmental catalogs -- formidable to many visitors -- have no instructions as to their scope, arrangement or use. SFPL issues few lists with recommended titles for users. Small wonder that visitors had to ask 367,000 directional questions in the last year, taking the time of staff members, in order to locate the part of the Library they were seeking.

For the most part the general areas and departments lack displays calling the attention of users to distinctive materials and to publications about current interests. As a public library, this is not only a crowded agency but a dull one to use. The exception is the notable series of displays of graphic materials on the third floor and occasionally the case displays in the second floor lobby. It is even possible for a user to come into the Library, see no books, take the elevator to the second or third floor, look around and ask, "Where are the books in this Library?"

The Main Library is organized into a series of subject departments. The advantage of this structure is that it provides distinct sections for readers in different broad fields (literature -- religion -- philosophy, history -- social sciences, science -- documents, and art -- music) along with staff members with experience in these areas. The disadvantage is that this is an expensive form of organization, requiring that staff be stationed at a variety of service desks even when use is not heavy. Besides the volunteer information desk at the entrance and the circulation and registration stations at the exit, there are eight public service desks in the building, mostly staffed with professional librarians; inspection trips during evening hours have often found all these desks staffed with no inquirers at most of them. The subject departmentation plan also necessitates maintenance of three large subject catalogs in subject rooms in addition to the comprehensive catalog in the General Reference Department.

The subject departments serve both a study-reference and a circulation function. Some users come in to obtain information or to sit down with sources. Others come in to get books to circulate from the building. The two functions can work against each other. The person coming in to study a topic finds that part of the material needed is not available

because it is out in circulation -- and the most frequently-used items are those most likely to be out of the building. Furthermore, some of these will not come back -- unfortunately the practice of keeping (in substance stealing) materials has been on the increase. From the user's standpoint this leaves holes in the collection -- the Library is unable to deliver although it theoretically owns the titles in question. To help meet this situation the subject librarians use various approaches. They may replace the lost items, which cuts into their already limited book budgets, and which also takes considerable staff time to determine that the book is actually missing, to re-order, and to process when the replaced material arrives. Or they may buy a copy of a new book and designate it "reference" -- that is, not for circulation -- thus becoming in part a reference-only library. The two functions -- study-reference and circulation -- should be separated and each provided for according to its own requirements.

One of the departments is made up of two contrasting parts: Science - Technology and Government Documents. This gives the unit a split personality. Science and technology is a distinct field of knowledge, while government documents are issued on practically all subjects. The users for the two groups are for the most part different, required staff skills are different, methods of cataloging and shelving are

different. Sound organization calls for Documents to be attached to a general department, as is the case with periodicals that cross subject lines.

The History Department has an attached Genealogy section, with a partial collection in this field. From the standpoint of service to persons doing genealogical research, this unit would be better located in the Sutro Library of California materials or in the Library of the California Historical Society. The space now occupied by Genealogy would be useful in changes in the Main Library proposed later in this report.

The several departments aspire to what they call "complete" or "comprehensive" collections in their respective fields, extending from elementary material up through graduate and research resources. The unofficial book selection policy statement refers at the outset to providing for "advanced scholarship and original research", and uses the word "research" several times on the first page.

In reality, the central collections hold relatively little in graduate research materials, although they may have moved in this direction when book funds were more ample in the 1960's. In recent years they have been unable to continue comprehensive buying at the advanced levels, and they

have been cancelling subscriptions to specialized journals. In collection building, the reach of the Library exceeds its grasp.

The Main collections can be more accurately characterized as fairly broad at the undergraduate or intermediate level for publications of the last 20 years, plus an accumulation of older materials that may occasionally be of value for historical reasons. Even this description must be qualified in that loss of titles has been substantial from the broad, intermediate holdings of recent publications -- either because of theft or failure of readers to return books borrowed on their cards -- and book funds have been so curtailed that systematic replacement of losses has not occurred. As a result the collections are riddled with holes.

Recently a "Popular Library" was set up in a section of the General Reference Department. Except for a few recent hard-cover titles, the collection is composed of paperbacks. The impression one gets is of a crowded and not-very-neat paperback bookstore, with very little organization to the material displayed. The section is used considerably, because it partially fills the gap in the Main Building of materials assembled for the general reader. Noting the need and the response, and remembering the prospect of an increased

resident population in the central section of San Francisco, one can picture a much more ambitious and appealing Popular Library.

For the most part this is a print library and not a multi-media library. Films, talking books, and other audio materials held by the San Francisco Public Library are located elsewhere in a Communications Center in the former Presidio Branch. Within the central departments, Art and Music holds collections of moderate scope in sound recordings and in sheet music; there are four listening posts for recordings with a wait often required to get access to these facilities. Other departments have small collections of records related to their subject areas. Pictorial material is not evident in the departments; this is essentially a book library.

Then there is the pervasive space problem. In the reading rooms, seating space has been sacrificed over the years to shelving, so that in some rooms it is hard to find a place to sit during busy hours. In the stacks every possible device has been used to gain shelving space, but material still is stored on the floors and in boxes along corridors. Despite this there is little evidence of systematic weeding to remove materials that will have little if any use. Essentially this is a contemporary-use library, but its stacks

are crowded with obscure and out-of-date material of value only in specialized historical research. There is little evidence of adjustment of acquisitions in cooperation with materials available elsewhere to the public, for example, in such fields as art (Museum of Modern Art and De Young Museum Libraries), law (County Law Library), education (Board of Education Library), and the major research collections in universities.

The positive step has been taken of acquiring some current journal issues and government documents in microform, and of transferring some back runs of periodicals to microfilm, thus saving storage space. However, long runs of earlier journals still stand on the shelves in bound form. The process of acquiring and of transferring to reduced-size format should be speeded up, along with systematic weeding, rather than (as has been suggested) considering a separate storage facility removed from the Main Library.

The department heads uniformly report a shortage of staff. The result is what they themselves refer to as "shallow" reference service, not carrying information inquiries as far as would be desirable if more time were available. Evidently this differs from department to department, with some going to extraordinary lengths to complete service

transactions.

Despite such shortcomings, over 2,500 people use the Main Library every day, and the count has fallen off only slightly in the last five years. Clearly there is need for this broad intermediate collection and for the ministration of the service-minded staff in the central unit.

The Main Library fills an important gap between extensive research collections in universities on the one side and limited resources in schools and small special libraries on the other. It stands behind and reinforces the smaller holding in the branches. It is the foundation of a public library for the broad range of serious readers in the general population.

Branch System

The first characteristic of the branch system that strikes the observer is the large number of branch libraries in San Francisco for the population and size of the City. San Francisco has a branch unit for each 26,000 people -- Houston has one for each 52,000, Detroit for each 48,000, Los Angeles for each 42,000. San Jose, with almost the same population and three times the territory, has 16 branches

rather than the 26 in San Francisco. This City provides a branch for each 1.7 square miles; the figure in Los Angeles is 7.0 and in Seattle 4.8. The rule-of-thumb has been that a well-placed city branch covers territory out about one mile in each direction, or a 4-square-mile area. By this standard San Francisco has twice as many outlets as it needs to reach all its people.

The second observation is the very wide variation in amount of use of branches. The largest units do 20 times the volume of business of the smallest.

This leads to consideration of cost per user in the small agencies. Unit cost is always higher in branches with a limited volume of use, and in the case of San Francisco these costs have become excessive in some instances. Various statistics make the point.

Here are the costs per use (i.e., each visit by one user) in the branch system:

\$3.00 or less:	Chinatown Branch Richmond Branch
\$6.00 or more:	Bernal Heights Branch Glen Park Branch

\$6.00 or more:	Golden Gate Valley Branch Ingleside Reading Center Noe Valley Branch Ocean View Reading Center Portola Reading Center Potrero Branch Visitation Valley Reading Center Waden Branch
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The other units fall between the \$3.00 and \$6.00 figures.

Here are the costs per item circulated (i.e., books, magazine or other item borrowed for home use):

\$1.50 or less:	Anza Branch Chinatown Branch Marina Branch Merced Branch Richmond Branch Sunset Branch West Portal Branch
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\$3.00 or more:	Bernal Heights Branch Ingleside Reading Center Ocean View Reading Center Portola Reading Center Potrero Branch Waden Branch
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The other 13 units fall between \$1.50 and \$3.00 per item circulated.

The larger branches consistently have the lower cost per user served and per publication distributed. Small

branches not only provide less adequate collections but actually cost more for what they provide. The point is not only high cost but also low service.

Another measure is "turnover" in the collection (i.e. average annual use of volumes on the shelves). The larger units have a turnover figure of 5 or more -- the smaller units of 1 or less. In other words, a book on the shelves of a larger branch is five times more likely to be used in the course of a year.

Amount of use of course depends on the number of people living in the locality; a branch serving an area with 10,000 people cannot be expected to do the volume of business of a branch serving 40,000 people. Yet when use is related to population, many of the same small branches again come out on the low side. Here are the units that have less than 1 visit per capita per year: Bernal Heights, Eureka Valley, Glen Park, Golden Gate Valley, Ingleside, Ocean View, Park, Portola, Visitacion Valley, and Waden.

Library authorities, recognizing the high unit cost of lesser-used units, recently changed four branches to "reading centers." Such agencies do not have a professional librarian, they have smaller book funds, and they are open

four rather than five or six days per week. No doubt this cuts costs to some extent, and the technicians in charge are doing a responsible job. But in terms of productivity for the money now spent, the reading centers are still the most expensive units in the system. The use figure works out to \$7.71 every time an individual enters these agencies. Without being cynical, one is tempted to suggest that each local user be provided with a taxicab ride back and forth to the nearest larger branch, where the individual would get better service and the dollar outlay for that service would be less than at present -- or provide bus fare and come out well ahead.

The reasons for higher unit costs in smaller agencies are clear. Whatever investment is made in books and other materials does not get full return because of low use. More importantly, a basic staff must be stationed and paid; the "store" is kept open even though it has few customers.

What has happened in San Francisco is that a limited number of users have found small, nearby branches a convenience for them. They naturally protest if the suggestion is made that the local unit be closed in order to strengthen a unit at a little distance. But other readers, finding the small unit inadequate, either go to a stronger agency if one is within reach, or discontinue using the Library

Table 1Use and Unit Costs in Branches

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Pop. Served</u>	<u>Annual Circ.</u>	<u>Per Cap. Circ.</u>	<u>Cost per Bk. Circ.</u>	<u>Cost per Use</u>	<u>Turn- over**</u>
Anza	25,877	72,173	2.8	\$1.48	\$3.15	3.0
Bernal	18,809	20,604	1.1	\$3.79	\$9.34	.9
Chinatown	26,242	143,155	6.4	\$1.24	\$2.15	7.5
Eureka	20,373	58,959	2.9	\$1.75	\$4.81	2.0
Excelsior	37,226	87,644	2.4	\$2.60	\$3.72	2.3
Glen Park	12,992	27,386	2.1	\$2.65	\$6.81	1.7
Golden Gate	16,530	51,137	3.1	\$1.83	\$7.07	1.9
Ingleside	15,092	11,720	.8	\$5.07	\$10.95	.7
Marina	21,724	106,836	4.9	\$1.35	\$3.35	3.9
Merced	18,612	93,215	5.0	\$1.48	\$5.20	3.6
Mission	46,599	93,215	2.0	\$2.06	\$4.19	3.1
Noe Valley	18,506	57,577	3.1	\$2.33	\$6.06	3.5
North Beach	18,409	60,053	3.3	\$2.05	\$3.38	2.2
Ocean View	11,633	7,540	.6	\$4.87	\$6.78	.8
Ortega	27,319	87,180	3.2	\$1.77	\$4.66	2.8
Park	23,335	36,409	1.6	\$2.59	\$5.78	1.7
Parkside	13,459	79,714	5.9	\$1.82	\$4.02	2.7
Portola	16,166	19,239	1.2	\$3.62	\$7.15	1.0
Potrero	9,132	24,385	2.7	\$3.75	\$8.86	1.2
Richmond	43,743	190,892	4.4	\$1.07	\$2.62	6.5
Sunset	40,330	143,155	3.6	\$1.45	\$3.81	4.5
Visitacion	16,433	17,386	1.1	\$2.98	\$7.14	1.0
Waden	16,771	13,694	.8	\$8.20	\$10.28	.4
West Portal	23,824	140,815	5.9	\$1.02	\$3.23	4.5
West. Add.	13,730	49,097	3.6	\$2.47	\$5.04	2.0

**Average number of times each book circulates per year.

altogether. An excessive number of branches builds a small public to whom convenience is the most important factor in reading, while neglecting the needs of those with more definite interests.

Branch libraries cannot be spaced out by slide rule and calculating machine. Cities have neighborhoods and local attachments of people that must be taken into account. Geographical barriers -- steep hills, super-highways -- require consideration. Not just the considerable mobility of adults but the more limited mobility of children and of senior citizens enter the picture. But granting all these points, San Francisco still has a large number of branches and is spending high per-user amounts for limited service in its smaller outlets.

Branches were evidently established when money was more plentiful and when neighborhoods were more close-knit and cohesive. The units continue today and all require operating funds. To indicate how close together they are in some instances, here is the walking time between selected smaller units and nearby larger branches:

North Beach -- 8 minutes walking time to Chinatown Branch.

Golden Gate Valley -- 10 minutes walking time to Marina Branch.

Western Addition -- 14 minutes walking time to Communication Center.

Parkside -- 17 minutes walking time to West Portal Branch.

Glen Park -- 17 minutes walking time to Excelsior Branch.

Ingleside -- 15 minutes walking time to Merced Branch.

Portola -- 16 minutes walking time to Waden Branch.

These are the times clocked by a staff member who was seven months pregnant. And in most cases there are direct bus lines from one unit to the other, with runs of five minutes or less.

For the most part the branch staffs in San Francisco are service-minded and community-minded. They work closely with users for both reference and reader-advisory purposes. The extent of relationship with neighborhood organizations is considerable in some but not all units. Children's service is particularly notable in the 21 branches that have children's librarians; even though the number of children in San Francisco has been declining, the proportion of branch

use that is juvenile amounts in many cases from one-third to one-half of use.

Staff commitment helps to maintain the branches but various conditions place restraints on service. Hours have been cut, with most agencies open only one evening a week and 11 having no Saturday hours. Staffs are stretched thin so that vacation periods and any illness causes particular problems. Maintenance and repair of buildings is slipping; after rainstorms the visitor sees books placed on windowsills to dry out.

Branch collections in San Francisco are on the small side, ranging from 16,000 to 38,000 volumes. Substantial branch collections in other cities are often 50,000 volumes in size. Most San Franciscans have a very small collection near them and a very large collection at a distance in the Main Library, but nothing between.

One-quarter or somewhat less of the volumes in each unit are for children, and the juvenile sections receive fairly regular use. The adult holdings break down into several groups with very different amounts of use from category to category of material:

Best sellers and recent, popular publications, usually kept separately in a few bookcases -- heavy use.

Light entertainment such as romances, mysteries, science fiction, also kept in separate cases -- substantial use.

Several racks of paperback books -- popular in most agencies.

A few thousand standard fiction titles -- occasional use.

Several thousand non-fiction titles -- light use (except in larger branches).

The standard fiction and non-fiction materials occupy the bulk of the shelves, and require constant expenditures to acquire recent publications and to replace titles lost or stolen, but often get only a small portion of use. On the adult side, 20 percent of holdings -- often no more than 3,000-4,000 titles -- usually account for 75-80 percent of use, except in the largest collections where the resources are strong enough that people come some distance to use them. In many branches, if the adult fiction and non-fiction books

were removed, circulation would be almost as much as at present.

The branches reflect a tradition of what a library should be. A library, according to this view, should have a "balanced" collection, with some material on most subjects, waiting on the shelves for the possible user. When funds are short, you can't keep up with the volume of publication, but you do the best you can. Readers fall off, but the pattern of distribution is not changed. In terms of adult fiction and non-fiction, most branches end up as small grocery stores whereas people if they can will go to a supermarket.

Some effort is made to reflect particular community interests rather than solely supplying a standard collection. Chinatown Branch has a Chinese collection, Western Addition a Japanese section, Mission Branch has several cases of books in Spanish, and Waden a substantial Black Studies section. Smaller language collections turn up in other branches. A few branches maintain a case on the Women's Movement. Art books are featured in two or three locations. All this is to the good, bringing the agencies closer to their neighborhoods, but for the most part the branches are more similar than they are different. Persons with limited education and lacking a tradition of reading get just about the same

fare as the middle-class communities. The reading centers, for example, do not reflect a fresh concept of service but are watered-down versions of former regular community libraries, with the little-used previous standard fiction and nonfiction materials standing intact -- and little used -- on the shelves.

The various branches, and the communities they serve, should not be viewed as remaining stable over the years as to amount and kind of use. The configuration is changing, with some units on a firm basis, others going through a period of transition, and some on the decline. In the period from 1970 to 1980, four branches experienced a definite increase in use. On the other hand, eight branches had a decrease in circulation of over 40 percent, and eight more a decrease of 20-40 percent. In half of the outlets, for all the efforts of staff to the contrary, the community is simply not turning as much to its local library. As this trend continues, San Francisco will be left with some agencies that are just shells of libraries.

In the branches, as in the Main Library, there is little evidence of topical displays -- on sports as the 49ers win the Super Bowl, gardening as spring comes on, background on weather when heavy rains and floods cause damage, economic theory as the national government pursues new fiscal policies,

opera when the season is on, materials relating to abortion as the national debate grows, etc. The world twists and turns, interests grow and wane, but the Library goes on its even way.

A "cluster" plan has been developed for the branches, with the various outlets coordinated in five geographical groupings. Both materials and staff are exchanged as needed. Given the large number of small units, this structure appears to be achieving a useful purpose. Whether it would be needed if each branch were more substantial and self-sufficient is doubtful.

What the San Francisco branch system amounts to is eight strong branches, with sizable buildings in accessible locations, with relatively large collections, with annual circulation of 100,000 or more, and drawing users not just from their immediate localities but also from more distant areas ostensibly served by other branches. A scattergram of home addresses of users of the Sunset Branch, for example, shows patrons from the Parkside, Ortega and Anza districts. Then the San Francisco system has 18 smaller units, essentially watered-down branches, which serve limited areas, reaching, besides children, primarily adults for whom convenience is the key consideration in their reading.

The problems of the branch system are the large number of outlets, the limited service capacity of the smaller units, and high costs per user served and per book circulated. The branch system as it stands is draining strength from the institution without producing substantial return for many of the dollars spent.

Government of the Library

Under the city government, the body legally responsible for library policy is the Library Commission, seven individuals appointed by the Mayor and serving without compensation. In accord with state law, their responsibilities cover financial policies, the hiring and general supervision of the City Librarian, and approval of plans for service. While staff operates the Library, and the City Librarian as chief administrator directs and coordinates the work of the agency, in the end it is the Library Commission that must act on a Plan of Development for the San Francisco Public Library. In practice the group shows concern for the Library, having an interest in its well-being, but has been passive in bringing forth proposals or in taking the initiative in meeting library problems.

The city government is operated under policies of fiscal

responsibility and of management by objectives. The Mayor met twice with the Library Commission in 1981 to discuss progress toward objectives. Regular contact and communication are maintained between the City Librarian and offices in City Hall. Members of the legislative group, the Board of Supervisors, also express concern for maintenance of the San Francisco Public Library.

Despite this interest on the part of City Hall, the Library stands somewhat apart in the municipal family as a result of its commission form of government. This fact behooves the Library Commission to become involved and, under the advice and guidance of the City Librarian, to take the lead on library matters and in presenting the library cause in municipal quarters. In the end they are the group responsible for what happens to the institution.

Administration

The top management group in the San Francisco Public Library is relatively small: City Librarian, two staff officers for finance and for personnel, two line officers for the Main Library and for branches, and two planning-coordinating officers for adult service and for children's service (the latter position has been vacant for two years, with an

assistant coordinator handling the duties).

All members of the group carry a heavy load and broad responsibilities. Most of their time and effort must be devoted to day-to-day and short-term operations and very little to long-range planning and measurement of results. The City Librarian must in addition handle various external relations, with the Library Commission, with City Hall, with Friends Groups, with organizations in the community, with the general public, and with the State Library.

The style of administration at the top can be characterized as relaxed yet decisive. Problems are not magnified but are dealt with as they arise. Decision-making is centralized, with relatively little participatory management and limited input in budget-making. The City Librarian maintains regular and personal contact with his senior officers, but has not promoted communication with the general staff, either by means of staff meetings or of periodic written communication. Relations with municipal offices are easy and functional, and exchange is regular with the Friends organization, but general public relations have been limited.

The continuing aim for several years has been to conserve the traditional strength of the institution in the face

of financial constraints. For the most part this effort has been successful. The San Francisco Public Library continues to perform at the critical point where resources and users meet. The one policy that can be faulted is the slippage in the book fund at the expense of the personnel fund. A particular soft spot in the Library at present is the collections, and this will accelerate unless the situation is corrected.

Relatively few new initiatives have been taken in recent years. SFPL today is essentially the Library of ten or fifteen years ago. Where new ventures have been started, they have progressed only through initial stages -- the computerized information program, for example, the build-up of audio-visual resources in the Communication Center, the installation of computer control of registration and circulation without developing a complete system that starts at the point of selection and uses the same machine-readable record for ordering, cataloging, processing, circulation and inventory. These comments are not intended to downgrade or dismiss the creation of a paper-back "Popular Library" in the main building, or the out-reach efforts in recent years to people in the Tenderloin and South-of-Market areas and to persons who are homebound or detained in jails.

Having devoted themselves primarily to rear-guard actions, the several general administrators have not developed clear-cut plans for the next period. But whatever the pressures, an agency needs to know where it is heading and where it wants to go -- in fact, the greater the pressures, the more the need for a plan. It is for this reason that the Mayor, the City Librarian and the Friends of the Library pushed the present study. The project is intended to devise a Plan of Development, but -- more importantly -- it should stimulate an on-going planning process, to enable the Library to meet new problems and opportunities as they arise. Planning and not a Plan is the underlying need of the agency. Whether all or none of the proposals in this documents are adopted, the institution needs continual planning if it is not to start slipping back again.

No official and up-to-date organization chart exists for the Library. As vacancies have occurred, an effort has been made to avoid recent top-echelon appointments in the interest of retaining flexibility to re-organize as the program and priorities of the 1980's come into place. In the process a few anomalies have appeared: the City Librarian technically serving as the Coordinator of Children's Services (duties are actually performed by an Assistant Coordinator), head of the Communication Center reporting directly to the

City Librarian. A reorganization at the upper level is suggested later in this report.

Staff of the Library

The San Francisco Public Library has 354 staff members (full-time equivalent). This is just about the same number as ten years ago, (for a period late in the decade there was an increase due to CETA workers, but this is no longer true). While total city population has declined, library hours have been cut, and fewer books acquired, number of staff members has remained the same; as a result the proportion of library expenditures devoted to personnel has increased from 72 to 81 percent of the total over the same period.

Among larger California libraries, SFPL has the most favorable ratio of staff to population -- i.e., provides more staff members than other California agencies.

Table 2

Number of Staff Members per 10,000 People Served
(Among Larger California Cities)

San Francisco	5.2
Oakland	4.4
Los Angeles	3.8
San Jose	3.7
San Diego	2.7

(Source: California Library Statistics and Directory,
1981, p. 13)

In contrast, among a sample of well-supported libraries in cities of similar size in other states, San Francisco has a less favorable ratio.

Table 3

Number of Staff Members per 10,000 Population Served
(Among Cities of Similar Size)

Boston	10.0*
Seattle	6.8
District of Columbia	5.4
Baltimore	5.3
San Francisco	5.2

*Until 1981; currently being reduced

(Source: Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 1980, p. 383-84)

By California practice, the San Francisco Public Library is relatively amply staffed; by national norms, it employs fewer staff members than some other cities.

Among the 354 staff members, 8.1 percent classify as administrators (including department heads and branch librarians), 33.3 percent as professional librarians without primary administrative responsibility, 19.2 percent as library technicians, 28.2 percent as clerical workers and 10.7 percent as maintenance personnel. By typical public library staffing patterns, having well over half of employees in the administrative-professional-technical ranks is on the high side;

many city libraries have held this proportion to well under half of the total, while building up the clerical component. Here are the proportions for the larger city libraries in California.

Table 4

Proportion of Administrative-
Professional-Technician Employees to Total Staff

San Francisco	61.8 percent
San Jose	47.2 percent
Los Angeles	40.9 percent
San Diego	35.0 percent

(Source: California Library Statistics and Directory,
1981, p. 13)

Department heads and branch librarians complain of insufficient clerical and paging staff to carry out the work that must be done, which suggests that the needed balance could be obtained by decreasing the number of professionals and technicians while hiring more clericals at lower salaries. Some staff members naturally oppose this adjustment. The result is that many trained people are engaging in routine tasks: at the branch circulation desk a page will handle charge-out and discharge of books for a period (at \$4.78 an hour) and then be replaced for the next period by a librarian (at \$8.82 an hour); the department head or branch administrator writes a complex report and then sits down for an hour or two to

type it; the page is absent for the day and the technician proceeds to shelve books. This is not effective deployment of personnel, nor does it promote staff morale.

The salary scale for non-professional personnel reflects compensation rates prevailing in the City, and the scale for professional librarians and administrators reflects rates prevailing in other large public libraries in California and in general the rates prevailing in the country. In that San Francisco is a high-cost living area, the salaries are barely competitive for recruiting and holding quality personnel. A report now pending before the Civil Service Commission would raise the compensation of librarians by 9.5 percent, which would make salaries more competitive. Compared with other city employees, librarians without administrative responsibility do not show up well in compensation -- among the "professional" classes that receive higher salaries are chemists, dieticians, junior engineers, pharmacists, psychologists and systems analysts; among the skilled classes with higher salaries are carpenters, electricians, locksmiths, painters, plumbers and roofers (San Francisco Civil Service Commission, Salary and Wage Survey, 1982). In other words, the salaries of librarians reflect the low economic reward given to those engaged in education, despite the repeated claims of officials and citizens alike that education is one of the pillars of prosperity

and well-being in American life.

It is difficult for a short-term consultant to appraise the productivity of staff, the standard of performance that is expected, the efficiency of work organization, and the thoroughness of employee evaluation. Some staff members are clearly committed and produce at their full capacity. Others appear to have little motivation and sit passively at service desks during slack periods waiting for an occasional inquiry or transaction. Separate from what an actual performance analysis would show, staff should be aware of the impression some members of the public have, as evidenced by the following quotation from a question form filled out by a regular Main Library user:

"The working procedures should be overhauled and combined so there won't be so many employees sitting at their desks staring into space. Employees should be made aware that their production is being constantly evaluated. Some of the workers are poor producers -- I don't mean all are."

A few words should be added about the genuinely motivated and productive portion of the staff. They work with dedication and skill -- and little reward. There are performers and nonperformers, and the two are not treated differently: both collect their salary checks and are awarded

increments in salary year by year. Promotions to higher grade are infrequent in SFPL, so most see advancement closed off. The performers are sustained only by their inner sense of accomplishment and service.

The morale of staff members is reported by employees themselves as being low (returns from questionnaire answered by 81 percent of the administrative-professional-technical staff), and this is confirmed by department heads and branch librarians. To a degree low morale is inevitable when funds are limited and workers feel that they do not have the means to carry out their tasks at a sound level. The feeling is increased by the sense staff members have of limited communication within the Library, so they do not know what is going on, and by a sense that they do not have an opportunity to engage in planning to help the agency meet its problems.

Despite low morale, the library staff continues to cope and in most cases to maintain performance levels at the service desks. What they seek is a plan for the future around which they can rally and a plan in which they as individuals have a definite place.

It is significant that almost one-fifth of the question forms returned by library users made the suggestion of volunteers

to help meet library staffing needs -- and offered the respondent's own time for the purpose. Librarians generally have a skeptical view of volunteers, on the grounds that they are not adequately trained and that they cannot be relied on to appear when scheduled. These objections are contradicted by the performance of volunteers at the entry information desk in the Main Library. Another concern is that unpaid workers will replace regular staff. This too seems unjustified in view of the fact that many of the duties that volunteers might carry are now understaffed or lacking in sufficient workers. Some help could be used in the downright task of getting books back in place on the shelves. The three-year job of extending the automated circulation system to all branches could be speeded up with outside aid. Volunteers could carry books to shut-ins. Persons with particular skills needed by the Library could be recruited. For example, a small corps of poster makers and artists could do wonders in brightening up displays in many of the departments and branches. Several people who claim they have public relations experience volunteered their expertise on the question forms, and certainly the Library could benefit from more effective publicity.

We are entering a new period in the attitude of people toward helping out with government services. The Library has a reservoir of good will among its users. In particular

older people, who are growing in numbers, are looking for ways to be useful. A modest investment by the Library in a Manager of Volunteers, to recruit, train and supervise, might well pay off both in getting some routine work done and in bringing in skills not typically possessed by library staffs.

Financial Support

Ninety-two percent of the money for the San Francisco Public Library comes from the City and County of San Francisco. Unlike some other city libraries (New York, Boston, Philadelphia), SFPL has limited endowment income, less than \$150,000 in 1980-81. The Library actively seeks private funds for only a few of its special collections and activities, with encouraging but still modest returns to date.

In the ten years from 1970-71 to 1980-81, city appropriations for the Library increased by 86 percent. During the same period the Consumer Price Index increased by 122 percent, so that the Library fell behind in purchasing power each year. In round numbers the actual loss annually was \$200,000-\$300,000, which accumulates to a substantial total over a decade.

From 1975 to 1980 federal CETA funds helped to close

the gap, but this "cushion" is no longer available. State funds for the Library have never been more than a pittance (\$23,987 in 1980-81). The State of California ranks 35th in the country in financial aid to libraries -- New York provides \$2.15 per capita, California, \$.23.

As inflation increased in the 1970's and after state-wide restrictions were placed on property tax rates, the City has made less of a proportional effort in support of the Library. In 1970-71 the agency received a full one percent of the city budget, by 1974-75 the proportion had dropped to .9 of one percent, and by 1980-81 to .8 of one percent. A recent study in Philadelphia found 1.7 percent of municipal funds going to the Library, and recommended 2 percent, which was almost achieved in the present year.

From 1970 to 1980, library expenditures by the City just about doubled, while expenditures for police and fire protection more than tripled.

Table 5

Increases in City Expenditures, 1970-1980

Police	264%
Fire	226%
Library	101%

Table 6

Revenue of the San Francisco Public Library (1970-71 -- 1980-81)

	<u>1970-71</u>	<u>1975-76</u>	<u>1976-77</u>	<u>1977-78</u>	<u>1978-79</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>
General Funds	4,574,874	5,482,218	6,132,169	6,635,075	6,844,090	8,263,273	8,433,653
Fines, Fees, Gifts, Misc.	122,569	139,694	89,722	160,133	190,554	251,692	484,672
State Funds (PLSA/CLSA)				26,038	42,480	28,636	23,987
Federal (LSCA) -BARC	221,380	336,393	204,200	238,000	390,400	385,300	304,718
-CVRP/ Com. Center		78,099	85,933	65,260	25,880	12,800	
Federal/CETA		971,944	977,041	1,046,600	773,100	995,057	388,742
TOTAL REVENUE	4,918,823	7,008,348	7,489,065	8,171,106	8,266,504	9,936,758	9,635,772

The police and fire money kept up with inflation, but library support fell behind.

Then, in 1980-81 and again in the present 1981-82 fiscal year, for the first time actual dollars accredited to the Library turned down. This was not due to an actual drop in city appropriations, which remained about the same, but to termination of the federally-funded CETA program. During these same two years (1980 and 1981), while dollars available fell slightly, the Consumer Price Index increased by over 20 percent (12.5 percent in 1980, 9.6 percent in 1981). In actual purchasing power -- ability to pay for books and staff -- the Library is almost two million dollars short of where it was several years ago.

In addition to the actual shortage, city policies in budget planning in the past few years have added an unsettling psychological factor. The Library, like other departments, was ordered to plan for cuts amounting to as much as 20 percent. This resulted in hasty consideration of drastic cutbacks. Then, when the budget cuts were not imposed, the library administration and staff (as well as concerned citizens) were unsure whether severe reductions were actually imminent in the next year or two (including substantial dismissals of staff) or whether warnings of budget cuts were false alarms.

This view is reflected in a letter (February 5, 1982) from the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce about the Business Library:

"Annually, since the passage of Proposition 13, we have been told that this facility must be closed, but it is still open. It is my opinion that this threat of closure has merely been an attempt to force the business community to indirectly subsidize the library budget."

To keep the record in balance, it must be noted that, on a comparative basis, SFPL is by no means a poor library in terms of support. It has greater per capita annual support than any other large city library in California.

Table 7

Per Capita Support
of Large City Libraries in California

San Francisco	\$13.75*
San Jose	\$11.60
Sacramento	\$ 7.84
Los Angeles	\$ 7.77
San Diego	\$ 6.36

*The figure shown in below source for San Francisco is \$14.28. Our number is an adjusted figure after removing BARC funds.

(Source: California Library Statistics and Directory, 1981, p. 14)

In the 1980 Bowker Annual showing support for 48 large public libraries in the country, only eight have higher per capita income than San Francisco (p. 385-386). SFPL does not have sufficient means to maintain a top-quality program, but it must be recognized that on a comparative basis it is well above average.

Thus the problem of the San Francisco Public Library is not solely one of financial support. Part of the problem is an over-extended service program. The Library tries to stock materials extending from research sources on the one side to ephemeral publications of the moment on the other, it maintains a multi-unit branch program in a very compact city, it continues small branches that have very high per-user and per-circulation cost, it maintains an expensive type of subject organization in its Main unit, it provides a relatively high number of staff members in relation to the population served, and within the staff it retains a relatively high proportion of administrative-professional-technician personnel in relation to lower-paid clerical staff. This is a library trying to maintain a program beyond its means.

The present city government has informed the Library that further financial restraints are in prospect. The Public Library is examining itself and contacting the public

to determine priorities. The same process is incumbent on the City as a whole. The decision that has to be made is the importance to be attached to the Public Library. If the City were to decide that it wants effective rather than deteriorating library service, the means could be found to accomplish this without undermining other municipal services, because of the moderate sums required by this facility. One percent of municipal expenditures would do the job.

A balanced budget is important for a city. Equally important is an adequate level of public service. Lack of either will drive people away. In its Public Library, San Francisco has an agency that for a very modest proportion of city expenditures can directly and indirectly enhance the life of almost every resident.

At the same time, private funds should be actively sought for particular parts of the service program that (1) apply to specific groups and (2) appeal to individuals or corporations of means. Private sources will never provide any large portion of total library support, but they can provide a significant portion for specific activities. Encouraging results have been obtained by solicitation of funds for projects in the San Francisco Room and for rental payments for the Business Library.

Fees have been suggested to augment library income. Charges for special services seem justified: for overdue books, for reservations to hold materials, for computer searches requiring a large amount of staff time. Overdue fines should be reestablished for children, not for the revenue this would produce but to speed up return of books. The present nonresident fee of \$7.50 is unrealistically low. The average cost per user living within San Francisco is close to \$40.00, but the outsider gets a bargain.

However, all such fees produce very small total amounts of money, particularly when the cost of collecting them is taken into account. Taking the next step of charging all patrons for regular library use -- \$5.00 annually for a library card, for example, or ten cents for each book borrowed -- would be counterproductive. At best these fees would produce only modest amounts of added income. At worst they would, because of the cost, cut out some groups in particular need of library service: many children, senior citizens with limited resources, persons with limited education and therefore often with limited income. The "free" library would become the institution for people with means.

Library Expenditures

The continuing load of an inclusive service program on the one side, coupled with inflationary pressures on the other, have forced library expenditures out of balance. The proportion of costs for personnel has increased from 64 percent of the total in 1965, to 72 percent in 1970, to 79 percent in 1975 and to 81 percent in 1980. During the same years the proportion for books decreased from 20 percent in 1965, to 16.8 percent in 1970, and to 9.7 percent in 1980. The amount for periodicals did a little better than that for books, primarily because the costs of journals rose at an extraordinary rate. It is interesting to note that the charge to the Library for services from other city departments (for building maintenance, repairs, etc.) more than tripled in the past ten years, an indication that other city services were also feeling the effects of inflation -- and passing them on.

The increased personnel allocation was no doubt well-intended: to preserve the precious commodity of an adequate and well-trained staff. But cuts in book funds cannot go on for long without serious consequences, for information and reading materials are the reason for the Library's existence. Staff in a sense are a means to the end of bringing reader and book, searcher and information source, together, and this

Table 8
San Francisco Public Library Expenditures 1970-80

	<u>1970-71</u>	<u>1975-76</u>	<u>1976-77</u>	<u>1977-78</u>	<u>1978-79</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>
I. Salaries, Wages & Benefits							
General Fund	3,204,032	4,303,955	4,624,313	5,084,726	5,212,097	6,257,615	6,395,572
Federal--LSCA							
BARC	130,116	193,063	220,636	292,763	267,579	304,371	319,329
CVRP/Comm. Ctr.	-	35,054	49,233	60,148	38,694	27,243	-
Federal--CETA	-	965,063	893,564	990,545	697,297	1,009,530	388,614
State Funds (PLSA/CLSA)	-	9,150	12,427	10,563	10,742	12,267	12,751
TOTAL	<u>3,334,148</u>	<u>5,506,285</u>	<u>5,800,173</u>	<u>6,438,745</u>	<u>6,226,409</u>	<u>7,611,026</u>	<u>7,116,266</u>
II. Books (Non-print included)							
General Fund	725,747	651,212	654,201	717,086	847,038	787,352	846,241
Federal--LSCA							
BARC	36,864	72,283	12,354	13,627	15,161	15,866	2,245
CVRP/Comm. Ctr.	-	13,590	3,157	8,526	5,029	2,625	-
State Funds	-	-	5,159	2,511	939	-	4,290
Gift/Fuhrman Fund	9,492	50,503	64,800	65,996	68,831	106,621	147,264
TOTAL	<u>772,103</u>	<u>787,588</u>	<u>739,671</u>	<u>807,746</u>	<u>936,998</u>	<u>912,464</u>	<u>1,000,040</u>
III. Periodicals							
General Fund	71,437	137,824	159,786	165,268	176,932	159,663	183,751
Special Funds (PLSA)	-	-	1,039	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	<u>71,437</u>	<u>137,824</u>	<u>160,825</u>	<u>165,268</u>	<u>176,932</u>	<u>159,663</u>	<u>183,751</u>
IV. Operations (Rent, Utilities, Etc.)							
General Fund	168,876	197,449	357,913	357,009	431,075	390,757	432,092
Federal--LSCA							
BARC	35,070	15,819	35,488	18,897	57,221	45,234	51,362
CVRP/Comm. Ctr.	-	22,948	15,164	17,647	30,560	961	-
Minority Recruitment	-	-	2,105	6,208	2,239	-	-
State Funds	-	3,313	5,775	7,598	14,317	1,575	6,994
Gift Fund	427	482	5,971	402	26	15,878	24,593
TOTAL	<u>204,373</u>	<u>240,011</u>	<u>422,416</u>	<u>407,761</u>	<u>535,438</u>	<u>454,405</u>	<u>515,041</u>
V. Contract Services							
General Fund	186,700	234,138	132,017	118,406	74,011	74,142	91,785
VI. Services of Other							
City Departments	55,384	77,582	73,993	192,580	189,291	181,022	175,348
GRAND TOTALS	<u>4,624,145</u>	<u>6,983,428</u>	<u>7,329,095</u>	<u>8,130,506</u>	<u>8,139,079</u>	<u>9,392,722</u>	<u>9,082,231</u>

cannot occur if the material is not there. As one indicator, a check was made of the holdings of branch libraries of 162 popular and award-winning nonfiction publications of 1975-1980 in topics of wide interest. While not every branch necessarily needs every one of these titles, 17 of the 26 branches had not obtained as many as half of them, a pretty low batting average.

Under the circumstances, SFPL has made good use of paperback books. They make up the bulk of the Popular Library in the Main Building and are prominent in all the branches. This is a sensible way to stretch limited funds. At the same time, undue dependence on this form tends to stress publications of the moment, with parts of the Library becoming more like paperback bookstores.

Approximately equal portions of expenditures go to the Main Library on the one hand and to branches on the other, each approaching \$4,000,000 annually and constituting a little over 40 percent of total outlays. In general this fairly even balance is commendable, reflecting even-handed concern for the central foundation and for local outlets. In that the Main Library also contributes directly to community service -- in the original selection of titles for acquisition, in sending books out to branches when needed locally, in handling of

difficult reference questions referred from branches -- this balance could justifiably swing over a little in favor of the central unit.

The percentages devoted to general administration and to technical services are within reason. Administrative costs have not been allowed to get out of hand. The overall figure for technical services is not particularly high, but the per-title cataloging cost estimated by the Cataloging Department -- \$20.00 per title -- is definitely on the high side, particularly in view of the use of a central data base (RLIN) for many of the items handled. One of the factors forcing up processing costs is delayed or repeated orders -- that is, a title is ordered in a given number of copies and processed when received, but then a supplementary order comes through for the same title, and must go again through the pipeline. Another factor is the practice of double-checking the classification number supplied by the computer source (usually the number assigned by the Library of Congress), thus repeating work already done. The motive is understandable, to maintain consistency with decisions made before RLIN was adopted, but there is little evidence to show that the old rather than the new classification number is more helpful to the user -- in fact the L.C. numbers in the computer, based on recent editions of the Dewey tables, more accurately reflect

Table 9

1980-81 Expenditures by Major Functions

		<u>Percent of total</u>
Main Library Materials and Services	\$3,640,000	40.6
(including maintenance, security, utilities, Office of the Chief of the Main, etc.)		
Branch Library Materials and Services	3,770,000	41.7
(including maintenance, rent, utilities, Office of the Chief of Branches, etc.)		
Technical Support Services	930,000	9.9
(including ordering, cataloging, shelf preparation, and computer cataloging sources)		
General Administration	740,000	7.7
(including accounting, personnel, Secretary to the Commission, Offices of Children's and Adult Services, etc.)		
	\$9,080,000	

Note: Amounts have been rounded off because of difficulty in allocating some minor expenditure items.

the organization of knowledge at the present time.

The cost of children's service -- occurring both in Main and in branches -- is \$1,200,000. This covers not just expenditures for staff and for children's materials but also for a portion of circulation desk costs and of building outlays. In that children's publications now constitute 21 percent of the total circulation, and attendance in some branches is one-third or more children, this is a suitable portion of total outlays. The percentage for children's service should not be cut even though San Francisco has a lower proportion of children than some other cities.

The bottom line on expenditures is that they have been stretched thin to cover an extensive program of service and many service outlets. As one small example, when the planning office conducting the present study requested a file cabinet -- any size, any age -- none could be found in the library system.

III. PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 1980'S

The preceding review of the San Francisco Public Library shows that the Library has been marking time or slipping back for some years. The foundation of collections -- the resources which the agency exists to provide -- has been weakened. Hours of service have been cut to the point where many people simply do not have a time when they can use their library. Personnel is short to staff the many outlets that are maintained. And use has declined, in some units of the Library quite drastically.

Two underlying factors account for the slippage. For ten years revenues have not kept up with inflation, and the system is over-extended, particularly in the number of branch libraries. Some of the outlets show an undesirable combination of inadequate service along with very high cost for each person served.

Unless direct action is taken the decline in service will continue. The appropriation proposed by the City for 1982-83 will keep the Library going and perhaps provide a little to help meet the continuing increase in the cost of books. But the funds available for the coming year do not provide the means to begin correcting the shortcomings that

have appeared -- they will simply keep the store open.

Moreover, unless direct action is taken, SFPL will not be able to take full advantage of the emerging development of computer storage and distribution of information. Any library that in the next ten years does not tie into this coming electronic revolution will be outdated and in fact will not be able to obtain part of the information it needs, because various kinds of data will be published only in machine-readable form. This does not mean that books will be passé, but the library of the future will be made up of a productive combination of the two.

Fortunately the management policies of recent years have preserved the essential strength of the institution. The collections built up over several decades are still there. The precious commodity of a trained and service-minded staff has been protected. Middle management is in place. The physical structures -- while often leaving much to be desired both in attractiveness and functional efficiency -- can still provide service for the people. The foundation remains intact on which to build and rebuild.

The alternatives before the Library are clear: either restructure the agency for best use of the funds available,

or drift into mediocrity. Another theoretical possibility is a substantial infusion of additional money in order to restore quality, maintain all present outlets, and build a computerized information center for San Francisco.

The city administration has expressed sincere interest in providing adequate library service. But the city administration at the same time seeks to be fiscally responsible in the face of state-wide limitations imposed on property taxes. There is no reasonable prospect of significantly increased funding from this source -- hopefully appropriations can be enough to prevent the Library from slipping back further. The State of California has provided very little financial support to municipal libraries, and the prospect here is no better. There is no choice except to turn in on the Library and get the best return from every dollar available.

The overextended nature of the branch system, described in detail in the preceding section of this report, provides the handle or opening for advancement. The many very small branches are draining off money without returning service at reasonable costs. A restructured branch system can actually improve service over the City while freeing funds that can be used for needed improvements in the Main Library, in automation

of record-keeping and information provision, and in management structure.

What this Library needs first is a plan to guide its development in the next years and then some hard dollars to stop its drift, to turn it around and get it moving again. This report sets forth a ten-year Plan of Development. And to get hold of some money from within, the report starts with the branch program. However, changes and improvements are also needed in the Main Library and are therefore set forth later in some detail.

Restructured Branch Library System

It is worth repeating some of the characteristics of the present branch system in San Francisco. There are two to three times as many branches as in other cities of comparable population, and this despite the compact nature and good public transportation facilities in the City. There are some branches within ten minutes walking time of each other, and many within a ten minute bus ride. Sixteen of the 26 branches have declined in use by 20 percent or more in the last ten years, and eight have actually declined 40 percent or more. The cost per user or per item circulated is twice as much in a small as compared with a large branch, despite

the poorer service given because of limited collections and in some cases (the Reading Centers) the lack of a professional librarian. A book purchased and placed on the shelves of a large branch will be used five times more often in the course of a year than if placed in a small branch.

Each existing unit has naturally built up a small minority of nearby residents who find it very convenient. They have a branch around the corner or down the street -- although many other San Franciscans do not have this even though there are 26 branches. Because many of these units are very limited in resources, they do not draw from any distance. Some people go to another and stronger branch -- others do not have such a facility at a reasonable distance and therefore do not use the library at all. Thus use goes steadily downward in the smaller agencies while cost per use goes up. The present system favors a small part of the population that happens to live near an outlet, and a part for which convenience is a major factor in determining what they read, while neglecting those further away and those with definite reading interests. Part of this system is the captive of a relatively small group that gets service at a relatively high cost per individual, while this part drains off money that could be used for better service for the whole City. The voices of the nearby minority should not prevail

over the less articulate voice of the unorganized majority.

The following is not per se a plan for reducing the number of branches or for closing branches. It is a plan for improving library service for all of San Francisco. This is the system that should be in place -- without consideration of whether or not it would save money. Why? Because it will provide better service to more people.

Recommendations

1. Build up seven of the larger branches strategically located around the City into "supermarkets", very substantial community libraries, within 20 minutes by public transportation to most residents, intermediate between small neighborhood "stores" on the one side and the specialty "shopping center" of the Main Library: namely:

Chinatown Branch

Marina Branch

Richmond Branch

Sunset Branch

West Portal Branch

Excelsior Branch

Mission Branch

- Collection in each to approach 50,000 volumes (the largest present branch collection is 38,000).

- Magazine collection of some 150 subscriptions (plus selected titles contributed by residents in the area).

- Resources to include audio cassettes and video tapes.

- Within five years each to have a terminal connected to the Library's Central Data Bank.

- Professional staff of four or five (about as at present) but with additional clerical staff to free the professionals to work full time with collections and users.

- All open six days a week, including Saturday and three evenings.

- Additions to annual budgets of \$25,000 to \$80,000 depending on anticipated use, as shown in Table 10.

2. Creation of nine special-purpose neighborhood libraries, in localities more than 15 minutes away from public transportation from one of the super-branches and/or localities

requiring nonstandard service programs to meet the particular needs of residents, namely:

Anza

Merced

Noe Valley

Ocean View

Ortega

Potrero

Presidio

Visitacion Valley

Waden

- Each to have a basic children's collection, along with story hours and other activities designed to stimulate and guide reading.

- Each to have a basic reference collection (encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs), for younger students and for quick reference purposes, and in time to be connected by terminal to the Library's Central Data Bank.

- Each to have a small special-purpose collection, directly related to major local interests and concerns, rather than large, standard adult fiction and nonfiction collections;

each special-purpose collection will be sharply different from the others (examples are described in "Discussion" below).

- One professional staff member in each, supplemented by necessary technician and clerical help.

- Open five days a week, five hours per day, including Saturday.

- Annual budgets in the general range of \$100,000 or a little more, as shown in Table 10.

If money is available to maintain additional neighborhood branches, those to be considered include Eureka Valley, Park and Parkside.

Three of the locations recommended for neighborhood branches -- Ocean View, Visitacion Valley, and Waden -- are among the present little-used outlets. The reason for retaining them is that they are 20 minutes or more by public transportation from another branch, and they are low-income communities needing access to information for adults and encouragement for reading for children. But use must be built up or they will be hard to justify. The plan proposed here assumes

that they can be built up by (1) focusing the collection on the special needs of the neighborhood rather than providing a standard fiction and subject collection, (2) participation by local people in determining what their local library service should be, and (3) outreach into the neighborhoods by branch librarians who are community-minded and willing to go outside the four walls into the life beyond the door. If this assumption is wrong, if use cannot be built up in the next three years, some drastic alternative will have to be considered, such as a bookmobile one day a week or a shuttle bus service operating from noon to 6:00 P.M. between these areas and the nearest large Community Library Center. Either of these alternatives would cost less than the \$300,000 annually required to maintain the three branches.

A simplified method of arranging materials should be used in the special-purpose branches. Instead of a long run of standard adult non-fiction, there would be 2,000-3,000 special-interest items, covering perhaps ten or twelve topics. They can be arranged by interest groups on the shelves, with filing in each group alphabetically by author. No subject catalog would be necessary, although an author-title listing would be useful. This plan would be easier for users, and it would save on cataloging costs.

This plan, then, calls for the closing of from seven to ten branches. The branch system would have 16 outlets rather than the present 26. The units to be considered for closing are North Beach, Golden Gate Valley, Eureka Valley, Glen Park, Bernal Heights, Park, Parkside, Western Addition, Portola and Ingleside. But this is not a plan for reducing service. Each of the neighborhoods affected by closings would have ready access to one or more of the "supermarkets," some as close as 10-15 minutes walking time and all within a ten minute bus ride.

A practical question is what use would be made of the branch buildings to be closed. Three of the ten (Glen Park, Ingleside and Portola) are in rented quarters. One branch is needed for the Children's Library Center. In some cases the remaining structures would be suitable for other cultural-educational purposes -- for example, the Bay Area Music Archives has been looking for a home (Golden Gate Valley?). At least three (Eureka Valley, Parkside and Western Addition) might well be sold for their commercial value, for community banks for example; they are of modern design, they are at ground level, and they have space for drive-in windows. Other structures might properly be used as community centers in their areas.

The restructured branch system will cost \$825,000 less than the present system. How can this be if service is improved? A basic factor is that the per-use cost in a large branch is half that in a small branch, so that concentrating more of the use in supermarkets saves money. Second, focusing neighborhood branches on special local needs rather than trying to provide complete libraries also results in savings. Finally, the closing of some units will free funds. It is the combination of these factors that leads to the difference in cost detailed in Table 10.

The \$825,000 saving will be used, as will shortly be explained, for two purposes: to make sorely needed changes and additions in the Main Library (the foundation of the whole system), and to move forward on automated record keeping and automated information provision, which benefits all parts of the Library and particularly the branches.

Discussion

This two-level structure will provide a very strong branch within a 20 minute public transportation ride for practically all residents of the City, plus special units in localities that are at a distance and that in many cases need non-standard service programs.

Table 10

Cost of Proposed Branch System

I. Community Libraries

Community libraries will be the strong points, spread strategically over the City, in very accessible locations, with enlarged book funds and staffs.

	<u>Present Annual Cost</u>	<u>Proposed Annual Cost</u>
Chinatown	\$249,837	\$300,000
Marina	\$178,756	\$220,000
Richmond	\$258,548	\$300,000
West Portal	\$168,439	\$250,000
Sunset	\$242,025	\$280,000
Excelsior	\$237,894	\$260,000
Mission	\$212,942	\$250,000

II. Neighborhood Branches

Neighborhood branches will be special-purpose units, not watered-down branches, but neighborhood agencies with quite different programs from one to the other, targeted at their particular localities, several of which are relatively low income.

Anza	\$127,881	\$130,000
Merced	\$212,942	\$140,000
Noe Valley	\$119,690	\$120,000
Ocean View	\$65,062	\$100,000
Ortega	\$168,571	\$145,000
Potrero	\$113,911	\$115,000
Presidio	\$80,000	\$120,000
Visitacion Valley	\$69,928	\$100,000
Waden	\$114,635	<u>\$115,000</u>

Total \$2,945,000

III. Comparison of Costs

Annual cost of present 26 branch system	\$3,770,000
Annual cost of improved 16 branch system	\$2,945,000
Saving	\$825,000

The Community Library Centers (the "supermarkets") would be spread in a circle at an intermediate distance from the center of the City, as shown in Figure 3. This distance out is desirable, because people tend to travel inward as they go to work or to shopping, so that many people will be passing close to these Centers in the normal course of their lives. Each of the proposed Community Libraries is on or immediately adjacent to heavy traffic arteries and public transportation routes -- for example, Richmond Branch is one-half block off Geary Blvd. and between public bus lines one-half block to the south on Geary, one-half block to the north on Clement, and one block to the west on 10th Ave.; West Portal Branch is at the convergence of three Muni Metro lines (K, L, and M) serving the southwestern quadrant; Mission and Excelsior are on or just off the main artery to the south of Mission St., one at 24th St., the other two miles beyond.

These are the larger branch buildings in the system; four have over 8,000 square feet, and the others between 6,000 and 8,000. None are as large as would be desirable. Ingenuity will have to be used to accommodate both increased numbers of books and increased numbers of users. Some reduction of needed space can be gained by using microfilm for back issues of magazines and in time by depending on computer terminals in place of large reference book sections as

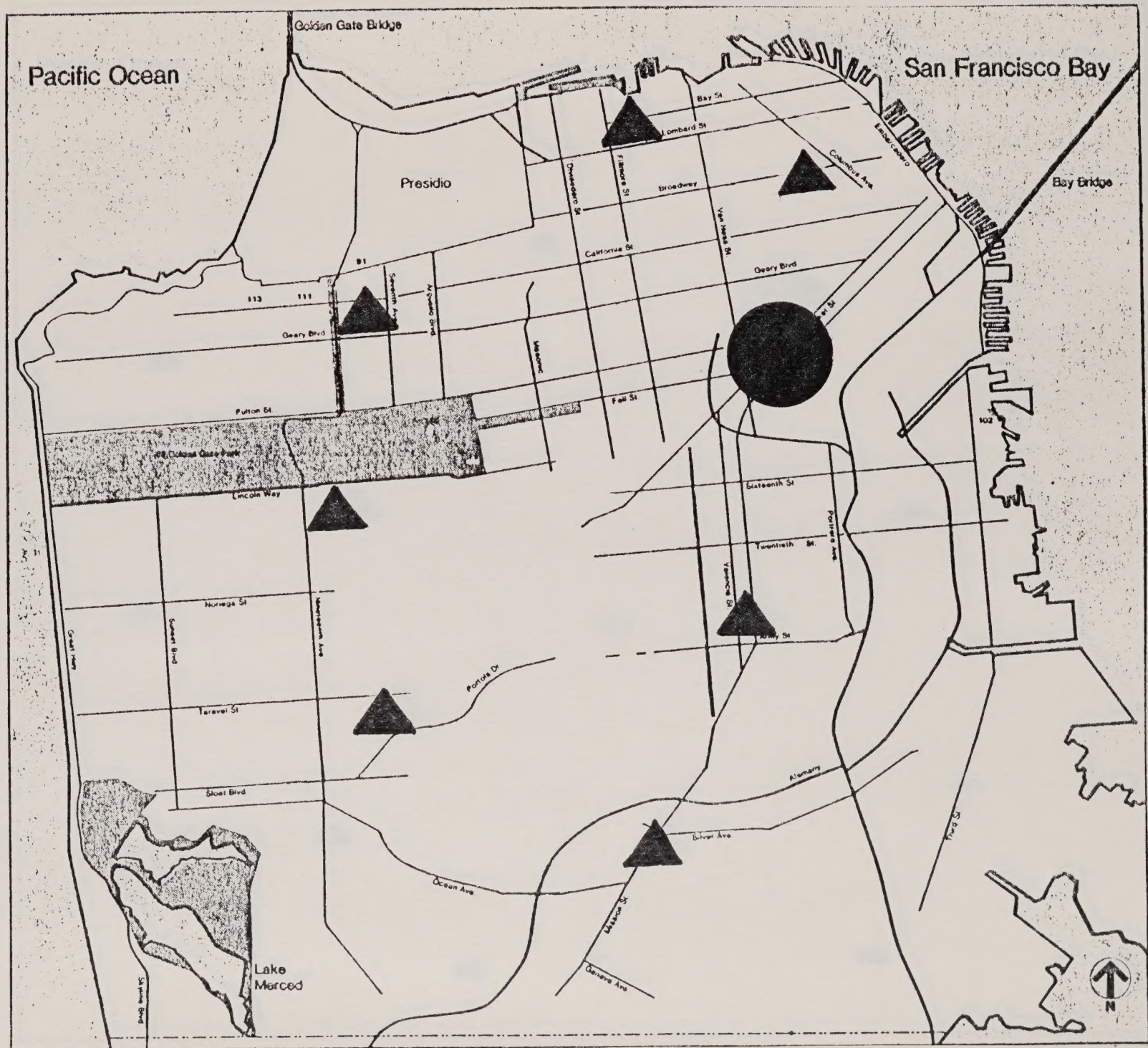
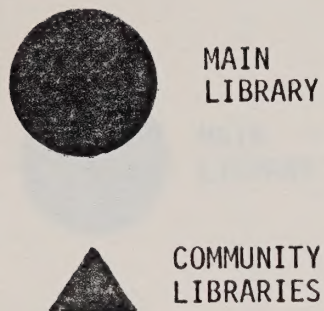
the central Information Bank is built up. In several instances (Chinatown and Marina, for example) space now used for meetings will have to be devoted to library service. This is to be regretted, because these meeting rooms are an asset to the localities, but it is the function of the Library to provide library service and not to provide meeting space. In many instances nearby parking will be a problem, but this is endemic to San Francisco and will not be solved by any one agency.

The designated neighborhood branches do not face a space problem; each, with the possible exception of the present rented quarters of Ocean View, have enough room to provide a special-purpose program targeted at the locality. This will be particularly true when the standard -- and little used -- adult fiction and nonfiction collections are removed.

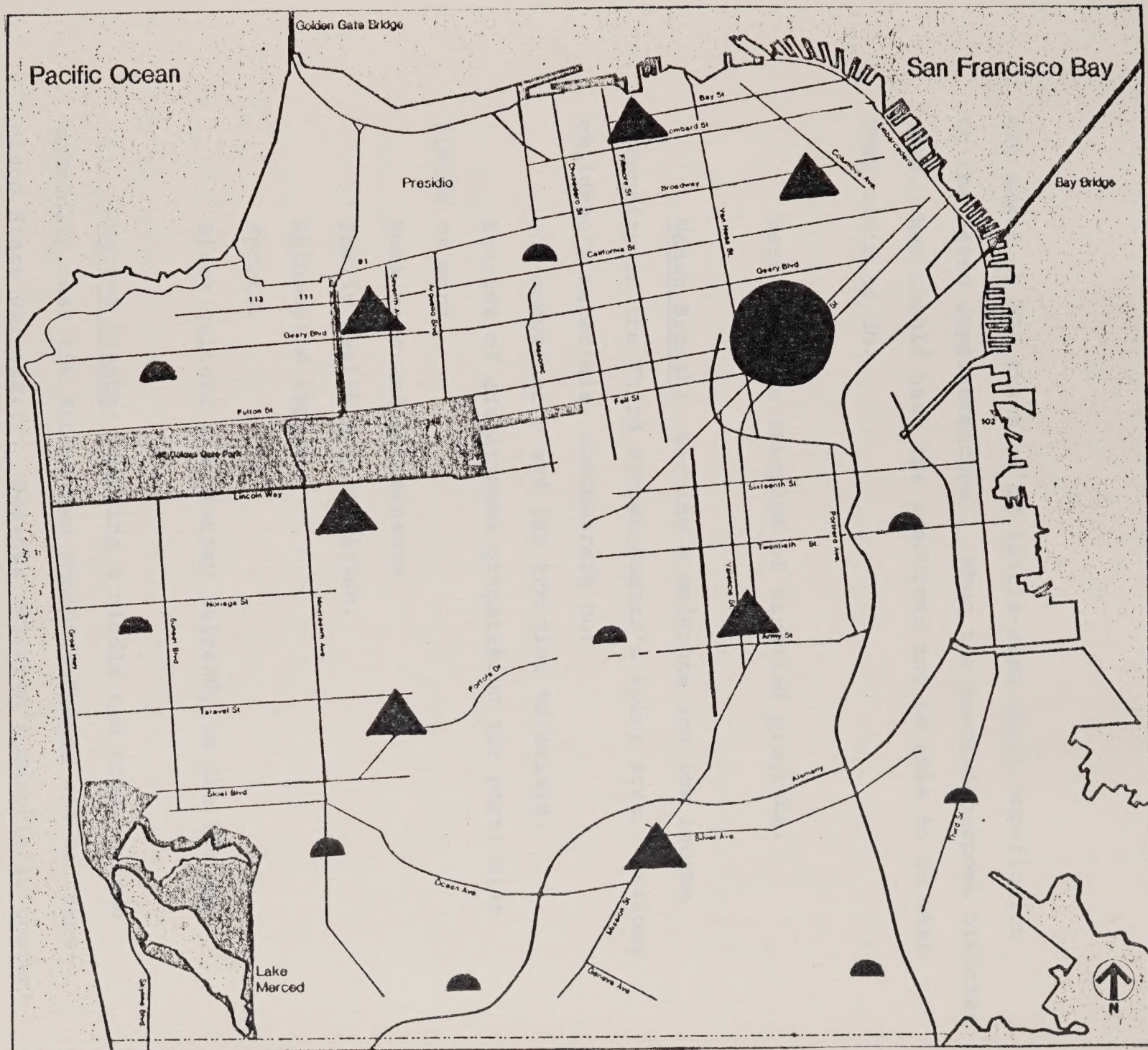
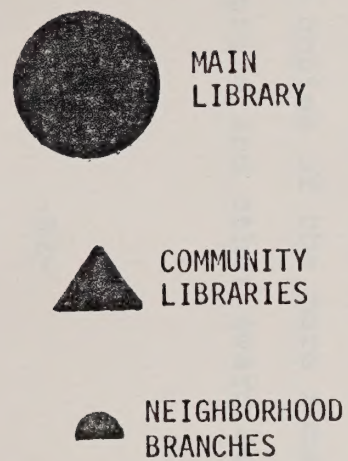
The special programs present a particular challenge and opportunity. A written plan should be prepared for each, by librarians familiar with the areas and with feedback from a local planning committee of citizens. Because it is important to be clear on just what these units will concentrate on, it is suggested that a year be taken for the planning, with present service continued during that time (except for

FIGURE 3

PROPOSED
LOCATIONS
FOR
COMMUNITY
LIBRARIES



PROPOSED
LOCATIONS
FOR
COMMUNITY
LIBRARIES
&
NEIGHBORHOOD
BRANCHES



the start of the transfer of little-used adult non-fiction to the seven super-branches). When the special-purpose branches open, they should have the resources and be able to do what they claim to do.

Here are some examples of targeted programs:

Waden Branch: serving a moderate and low income community in the Third Street-Hunter's Point area. Besides children's materials, concentrate on:

Job opportunity and job training materials.

Sources of educational preparation for particular fields of work.

Home care and maintenance.

Family health and nutrition.

Automobile repair.

Sports.

Black culture and history (already in the branch).

Merced Branch: serving a middle and upper income community near the Stonestown Shopping Center and San Francisco State University. Besides children's materials, concentrate on:

Duplicate copies of the more substantial best sellers.

Pulitzer prize and other award books of the last five years.

Biographies of contemporary figures.

Arts and crafts publications.

Travel.

Personal life adjustment (personal psychology, mid-life crisis, etc.).

Ortega Branch: serving a moderate income neighborhood with an increasing number of families of Asian background, including more children and teenagers than average. Besides children's materials, concentrate on:

Literacy materials (perhaps with one-to-one tutoring in English, using volunteers for the purpose).

American culture (history, government, financial systems, prominent figures, etc.).

Home repair and maintenance.

Young adult collection and reading counseling.

Professionals and local people, working together, would come up with richer and more pertinent programs. It is proposed that the branch librarians to be involved work as a planning group, under the Chief of Branches, during the latter half of 1982, each to come up with an individual plan. Then there would be time to get ready, including the transfer of some materials out and the acquisition of materials for the focal topics before launching the new program by mid-1983.

In this planning, special-purpose branch librarians should not take too narrow a view of their "neighborhood"; there may well be people at a little distance who are seeking special facilities of the type contemplated. For example, Ortega should think about the whole western slope from Golden Gate Park south to Sloat Blvd.; the branch is close enough to the main north-south artery of Sunset Blvd. to attract people from up to a mile away. Waden, Potrero, Visitacion Valley and Ocean View should take a similar somewhat expanded view of their territory.

Preparing for the Restructured Branch System

It is essential to plan carefully for the implementation of the changes that have been recommended. Both the public and the Library must have time to get ready. While action must be taken, precipitate action could create unnecessary reaction that would block the whole project.

The restructured branch system should be presented for what it is, a plan to improve service both in branches and in the Main Library. People must have time to absorb this. The purpose and balance of the plan cannot be presented effectively in a few minutes in a public meeting. Those concerned should first have a brief flyer or folder that they can study,

after which they can express their views at public hearings.

Even before that, the officials most responsible -- the Mayor and the Commissioners -- must be in agreement on what is proposed. If this united front does not exist, the plan will be in jeopardy.

It is suggested that implementation occur in phases. The first step should not be the negative one of announcing that some branches will be closed. Rather, the first announcement would be that key branches in each section of the City are being strengthened -- and then one year taken to actually make improvements. As they occur the public in each section should be kept informed of the steps taken -- for example by means of articles in community newspapers -- and should be invited to visit their developing Community Library Center. It would be possible to take these initial steps without substantial amounts of money, for much of the early strengthening of the seven centers would be accomplished with the transfer of books from other branches, plus the use for one year of the book budgets of the branches that are going to be closed.

Under this phased schedule, no branches would be closed until 1983. By the time of the closings some local users will have become accustomed to using the Community Library

Center in their area. For others the existence of the Center would be stressed. This would not be a promise of some future improvement but a reality that they could go and see the next day -- or, better yet, which they will have visited before the public hearing.

In public hearings, it is important that all of the public, and not just a portion with one viewpoint, be represented. If a negative plan is announced, followed immediately by public meetings, only the minority that opposes the change will appear; the supporters of the Library, not being affected, will not come out. If the implementation program suggested here is carried out, in the intervening year a support group for the restructured system can be built up, and they will come out to public hearings because they will have something they want to protect.

By such means public hearings become truly public, with a balanced reaction to proposals for developing the library system.

An additional but secondary advantage of a phased implementation program is the opportunity it provides the library staff to prepare for the changes. Jumping too quickly into substantial modifications can result in mistakes, frustration

and disillusionment. The heads of the Community Library Centers must feel their way into an accelerated improvement program. The heads of the special-purpose neighborhood branches must make plans as to just what their special purposes are.

Decision, determination and perseverance are essential in changing an institution. Commitments must be made, steps of implementation defined, and a schedule made and adhered to. But sudden action is not essential and can thwart even a well planned enterprise. The budget figure for 1982-83 that has been suggested by the City leaves just enough room to carry out the restructuring of the branch system over a one-year period.

Revitalization of the Main Library

The Main Library is the foundation or cornerstone of the San Francisco Public Library. It serves three broad functions: direct service to San Franciscans needing specialized information and reference-study resources at a depth beyond that which the branches can provide, back-up service standing behind the branches in selection and provision of resources, and support service for the whole system in the ordering, cataloging, processing and circulation of materials.

The preceding account (Section II) identified creeping but pervasive shortcomings in the central unit. The collections have gaps in substantially used past publications and are not fully keeping up with current books and periodicals; clerical support staff is short in the subject departments; resources are difficult for patrons to locate and use; space is sorely overcrowded; and there are no Sunday hours.

Correction and improvement will in many cases cost money. Where will this come from in a very tight budget?

Recommendations

1. Approximately \$400,000 of the annual saving in the restructured branch system should be used to bolster collection and staff in the Main Library. Supplementing the subject department book and periodical budgets by \$200,000 in each of the next several years will enable these units to replace some materials that have been lost (i.e. stolen) and to acquire more of the current output. An equal sum added to the staff budgets will enable each of the units to add one or two staff members, clericals in most cases, in order to fully free trained librarians for professional service. These are not dramatic changes, but they will strengthen the two pillars of subject library service, materials and staff.

2. Subject departments in the Main Library should become reference only -- materials will not circulate out of the building. The primary purpose of the divisions is to provide reference and study collections for use in the building. It was noted in the preceding section that combining study-reference service and circulation service in the same unit works at cross purposes. There would be several advantages: needed material would not be sitting in a home or office, the rate of loss through failure to return circulated books would be reduced, it would be less necessary to buy duplicate copies. With the shortage of funds, the departments have already been tending in this direction by buying one copy of titles and making them reference, for use only in the building.

3. A much enlarged Popular or Circulating Library should be established, to provide the more substantial and popular titles of the last ten years or more for circulation. Some materials will be paperback but most will be hardbound. Generous provision should be made of duplicate copies so that readers would have a good chance of obtaining what they seek. There would probably be 100,000 plus volumes in the Circulating Library. The display (merchandising) of materials should be informal, appealing, colorful. A few displays from this unit should be placed in the entrance lobby in order to have books in evidence when one enters the building. Something over

\$100,000 should be used from the branch savings to establish this unit, plus substantial transfer of titles from the reference departments, particularly fiction, drama and poetry from the Literature Department.

There would be no need to mark the card catalog to show which titles are in the Circulating Library. All items would be in the subject departments, where the original selection of materials would be made, as at present. Titles to be located (that is, duplicated) in the Circulating Library will be selected by the staff of this unit from the more comprehensive selection of the subject departments. Users consulting the catalog will get a call number for the title sought, which they will then seek in a subject department if they have a reference-study purpose (with assurance that the volume will be there and not out in circulation), or will seek in the Circulating Library if they wish to take it home (where they may or may not find the title on the shelves, which is the situation at present).

Not all changes needed in the Main Library require substantial amounts of money. Several important developments rather require clarification of policy and more logical organization and staff deployment.

Recommendations

1. The collection building and materials selection policies of the subject departments should be focused on the broad range of informational-educational-cultural publications up through the undergraduate level or equivalent. This would de-emphasize graduate level and research materials on the one side, which are better left to university and research libraries, and on the other side would de-emphasize ephemeral publications of the moment, which are better left to paperback bookstores and supermarket racks. San Francisco Public Library simply does not have, and is not likely to get the money to maintain complete collections, running the gamut from the esoteric to the trivial. It will serve better by focusing on the broad central range, beyond what students and readers have at home or accessible in the corner drug store, but short of original research materials in universities. Closer consultation and coordination with these latter institutions will help to mesh the two types of collections.

One dividend of this clarification of policy is that the terribly overcrowded stacks can be rigorously weeded, even including the gift of some materials to research libraries. Librarians tend to resist the discarding of material; they prefer to acquire and preserve. Someone, at some time,

might want the material. This is a justified position if the purpose of the agency is advanced research and original scholarship, and if no other collection has the material. But with a less overly-ambitious goal, and with other libraries carrying the advanced research responsibility, there is not a section of the stacks that could not be weeded to good effect. Failure to do this results over the years in building up a dead weight of little-used material, in shelving space crowded to the point of inefficiency, and consideration of a separate storage facility in another location, which would be both costly and inconvenient.

2. A task force should be appointed to plan and develop self-help aids for users. Everyone agrees that the Main Library is difficult to use. An unusually high percentage of the questions coming to staff members -- which means a definite portion of an already labor-intensive service -- are for purely directional and locational assistance. The detailed signs recently installed in the building are a step in the right direction. Here are additional and not expensive steps that can be taken:

- A detailed directory in the entrance lobby showing where materials on several hundred topics are located (similar to a department store directory).

- A small pick-up floor plan of the building which users can carry with them as a guide through the building.

- Instructions at the card catalogs showing the scope, organization and use of these tools, in the form both of display boards above the catalogs and of leaflets some users can sit down and study.

- A general "How to Find Library Materials" leaflet introducing users to the various finding aids, such as catalogs, periodical indexes, bibliographies and computerized literature searches.

- Lists of recommended readings on current-interest topics, probably developed in connection with the expanded Popular Library or Circulating Library.

Commercial agencies from department stores to drug stores to banks have developed arrangements and aids for facilitating use. Many people prefer to proceed on their own, and this saves the time of personnel. In the Library there will always be staff to assist users who cannot find their way even with such aids. But it is in the interest of best use of money and staff to provide self-help aids to the extent possible.

3. The Documents section should be separated from the present Science-Documents Department. Subject coverage of the two is different, staff skills required are not the same, contrasting methods of arranging and handling materials must be used. The logical place for Documents, which cover all subjects, is as a part of the General Reference Department. Assuming the present Popular Library is moved -- which will be necessary if it is to achieve its increased role -- space in the General Reference Department can be arranged for a documents service desk, and space opened in the adjacent stack area (this latter becomes possible with a weeding of the stacks in accord with a more focused collection building policy).

4. Another unit that is out-of-place is the genealogy research section within the History-Social Science Department. This is only a partial collection for the purpose, and users have to telephone volunteers to get assistance. In this case the unit should not be in SFPL at all. Users will be better served if this genealogy material is combined with similar material in the Sutro Library or the California Historical Society Library, both of which have staff on duty.

5. Use figures in the Main Library for different hours of the day and evening should be obtained and analyzed,

and not just a door count but volume of use at the various service desks. Visits through the building on several evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M. have revealed (1) three or four staff members at the circulation desk when two people could readily handle the volume of work, and (2) one or two professionals at each of the five service desks in departments (four subject units and General Reference) with a total of only two or three inquirers at all these stations combined. The layout of the building is such that one desk could serve the Science and the Art-Music units on the first floor (a temporary desk located at the end of the long corridor) and another desk in General Reference could serve the three units on the second floor. This may seem like a small point, but use of these cut-backs only during evening hours alone, from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M., would save several hundred dollars a night for 150 nights during the year, or a saving of \$25,000 - \$30,000 -- to say nothing of the better impression that would be made on the public.

Communications Center

The Library maintains an audio-visual and talking-book section, located in the former Presidio Branch. The Center is one of the achievements of recent years.

The film section is not particularly impressive, being limited to material that can only be used in film showings in branches (a use that has been declining) and does not provide films for showings by community organizations and others.

Service for the blind has been developed in recent years. SFPL has been designated a sub-regional unit in the national system of Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. A considerable collection of talking books has been built up, mostly from the federal program but supplemented by items recorded locally. There has been a part-time braillist on the staff.

The very development of this program has nurtured a user group that now seeks better facilities and services. Space is crowded in the present facility, both for blind users and for talking books. The group believes that staff is not fully sympathetic with their needs. Conflict over space has developed between the blind patrons and sighted readers in the nearby community.

The Center also maintains service for the deaf, mainly by means of special visual material. Staff is provided with facility in sign language. Here, as in other aspects

of the unit, the head of the Center has been resourceful in designing projects and gaining outside funds to go forward.

All of the foregoing is crowded into a building that also continues to give traditional branch-library service in the community. And these two contrasting endeavors -- reaching a city-wide handicapped population and serving a local neighborhood -- have been placed under one administrative head.

It was a mistake to move the Communications Center to its present site. It is not centrally located and the quarters are not suitable to its purpose. While it is the audio-visual wing of the whole library system, it is not housed with the central book collection. Inserting it into a branch has resulted in competition with neighborhood service for space, and competition also for administrative support and development. Neither group of users is satisfied with the arrangement, neither the local residents nor the handicapped of the City.

Recommendations

1. Move the films, video-tapes, and recordings of the Communications Center to the Main building, bringing

back the audio-visual arm of the Library to the central reservoir of printed materials. Location would be better for the several groups of users. Adequate space can be found for the unit in the central building, and at the same time space will again become available in the former Presidio Branch.

2. Keep Service for the Blind and the talking-book material in the Presidio building, using the ample space on the main floor for the purpose. The talking books for children, now at the Excelsior Branch, should be combined here with the adult material in the same form. Staff should be increased for Service for the Blind, drawing on part of the additional central personnel money resulting from the restructured branch system, and making sure that the added staff fully understands the approach of blind people to the record of knowledge.

3. Assuming a "special-purpose" branch program is maintained in Presidio, as previously recommended, this could be worked out on the lower level of the building.

Business Library

The separate Business Library is one of the impressive service units of SFPL. Its purpose is clear, it has developed

a service program suited to that purpose, and it is heavily used (average of 670 persons a day). Its cost per use (i.e. each visit by a user) is less than in the subject departments in the Main building.

According to a poll in late 1981, one-third of the users are from larger corporations or enterprises. Some of these have their own libraries but at intervals need information outside of their files. The remaining two-thirds of the users are either "small" business people or individuals pursuing an interest in finance, merchandising, employment or professional endeavor.

The extra cost of maintaining this unit is just about \$100,000 per year -- almost \$50,000 for rent (which is likely to increase in the near future) and over \$50,000 for duplicate materials (primarily business services and statistical sources) which are also in the central collection. It would be a mistake to think that all or most of the \$300,000 cost of the Business Library would be saved if it were closed and the service moved to the Main building. Unless service to business were eliminated or sharply curtailed, most of the staff would have to be retained, and the larger share of the cost is in personnel.

But \$100,000 is extra expenditure, made to provide the

central business community with nearby, convenient service. The question is whether that community considers the service important enough to make up the difference either in contributions or in other forms.

An Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Business Library has been exploring this other prospect. In a little more than a year the business community has contributed \$52,000, which is in the bank to pay next year's rent. The committee's efforts are continuing, including a search for rent-free space, which they hope a corporation will provide as a tax write-off. Because of the shortage of space in the Business District, and its high rental value, this may be a forlorn hope.

Business firms are currently being asked to help support many kinds of causes. But it is one thing to make a contribution to the symphony or to a community project, and quite another to contribute to its own source of information. The first is a worthy social interest, but the latter is simple self-interest on the part of the business community, to have the data necessary for its own planning and decision-making.

The Business Library deserves to be given a chance to continue. The combination of a vital service program and

some progress in fund raising should not be killed off prematurely.

Recommendations

1. The Business Library to continue for a three-year test period, 1982 to 1985, to see if the extra cost of \$100,000 can be raised in the business community. One promising prospect is to get organizations and enterprises to commit themselves to annual pledges for a period of time, such as five years (even small continuing pledges of \$100 or \$200 annually from smaller businesses would help build toward the total). Another prospect is to get developers of new office buildings to commit the necessary 10,000 square feet of space in their plans, in lieu of the requirement by the City Planning Commission for participation by developers in additional residential space as a condition for approval of their plans. The director of the City Planning Office has said that this is a possibility.

2. If private sources of funds cannot be found by 1985 to make up the extra \$100,000 cost, if the business community is not prepared to support the facility to this extent, then its service should be shifted to the Main Library and developed as an adjunct to the History and Social Science

Department.

3. In the interval, there is no need to continue all the present duplication -- some is necessary but not all present duplication is necessary. \$20,000 a year could be saved by acquiring one publication or subscription and placing the material in the Business Library, to which Main Library users would be referred if necessary. Then, if the Business Library is not continued as a separate entity, the material would simply come back to Main at that time.

Adjustments of Space in the Main Library

To carry out the foregoing recommendations, several units of space must be opened up in the Main building. There are various ways in which locations can be juggled. Here are the most likely prospects:

1. Transfer the Children's Room to one of the branches that will be closed, creating a Children's Library Center for the City. At present the Children's Room is crowded, the office for the Room is so crammed that it is hard to see how work can get done, and the children's Historical Collection is hidden off in the stacks. Possibilities for a branch location -- depending on what final decisions are made -- are

Eureka Valley, North Beach, and Western Addition. These are among the somewhat newer branches in the system, and all three have relatively central locations with good transportation. Each has more space than the present Children's Room, so that the current and the historical collections could be united, and the office of Children's Service also combined in the same location. All three have local juvenile constituencies to be served. The result of this move could be a more distinguished children's division in SFPL. Both early-childhood service and a service promoting the transition of children to beginning adult use (a kind of young adult facility) could be developed. Assuming that the Children's Room is moved out, there must be a small, appealing juvenile section in the new Circulating Library in Main.

2. Another area that can be made available for public service is the large room on the north side of the third floor now occupied by miscellaneous activities: periodical processing, Chiefs of Main and of Branches, the graphic artist, and the Friends of the Library. Alternative locations for these several units are suggested below.

3. To start the shift in the building, the Literature Department should be moved to the present Children's Room. This is smaller space than occupied by the Department at

present, but the Literature holdings will be distinctly smaller after considerable parts of its fiction, drama and poetry are transferred to the Circulating Library. The adjacent corridor space now occupied by art books will also be needed to accommodate the literature holdings, which space should become available after the rigorous weeding of the Main collection previously recommended.

4. The proposed Circulating Library could then be installed in the present Literature Department. This is a good-sized area located conveniently near the top of the main staircase. Consideration should be given to including the present Genealogy section (which on an earlier floor plan for the building shows a direct connection) through the area now occupied by part of the BARC operations, which may in any case have to be reduced because of the impoundment of the federal funds on which they depend. The Circulating Library could become one of the most inviting and colorful sections of the building. Some study tables will be necessary, but also some attractive easy chairs for comfortable reading. Here is where a gift might be solicited, for decoration and furnishings, with the name of the donor attached to the Circulating Library.

5. The north wing of the third floor would become the

Audio-Visual division of the Library (the Communications Center), that is, the main bulk of the space, back to the present graphic-artist section. The square footage is adequate, as long as the space-consuming talking books remain at Presidio. The central unit would provide the present and expanding services for the deaf. By means of imaginative display and suitable equipment for audio and visual materials, this division of the Main Library could provide an introduction to non-print communication for persons of differing backgrounds. This is also the kind of special facility that might appeal to a donor for providing both materials and equipment.

6. This leaves some of the activities now in the 3rd floor north wing to be provided for. Periodical Processing could go into the space now occupied by the Office of Children's Services (which will be in the new Children's Library Center) and if necessary into the Office of Adult Services (which in the proposed administrative reorganization will be absorbed into a new position of Chief of Public Services). Incidentally, this first-floor location for Periodical Processing would reduce the amount of moving of incoming magazines to the third floor for recording and then back to lower floors in the subject rooms. The graphic artist could go into the room temporarily occupied by the

Figure 5

Proposed Utilization of First Floor

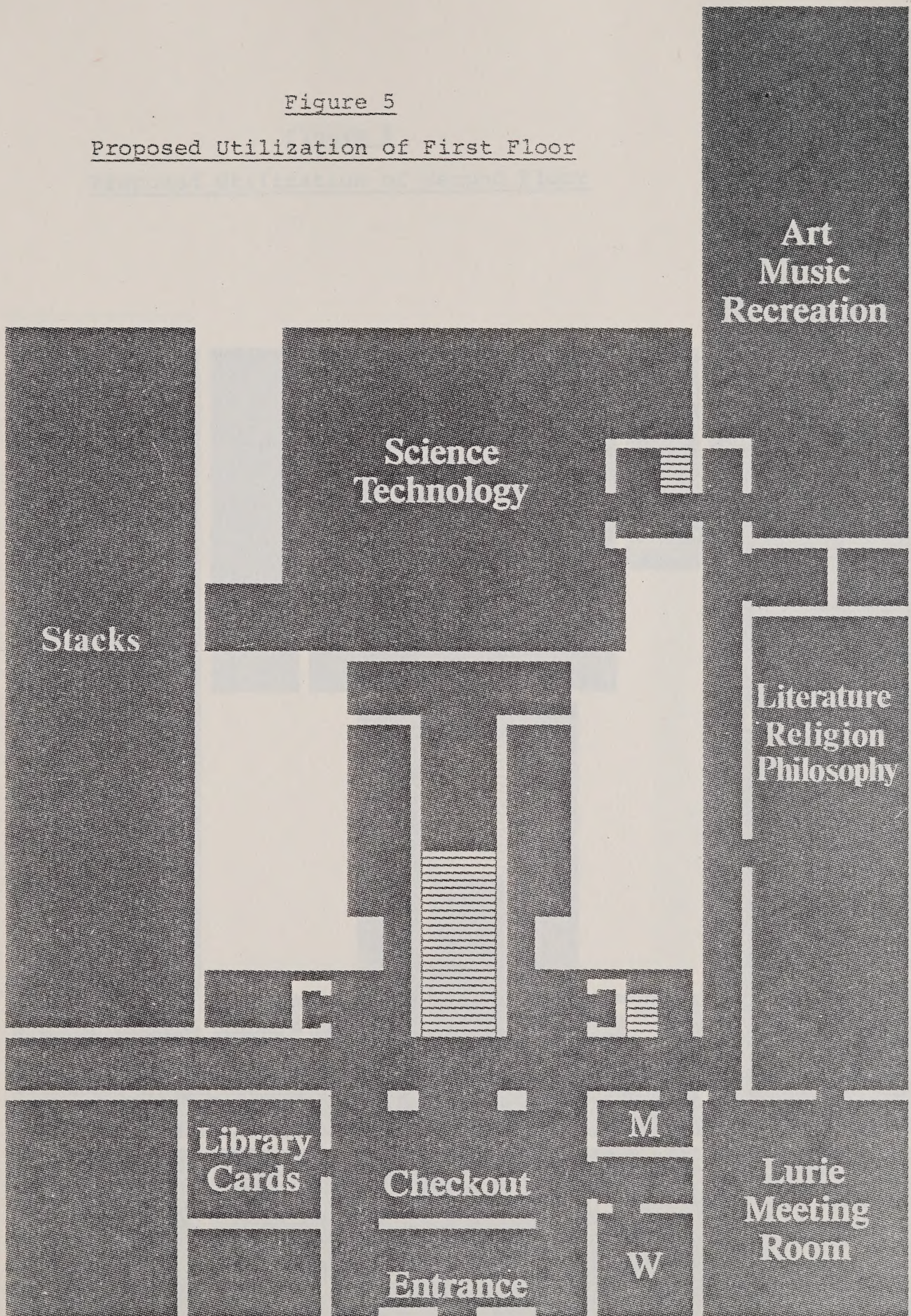


Figure 6

Proposed Utilization of Second Floor

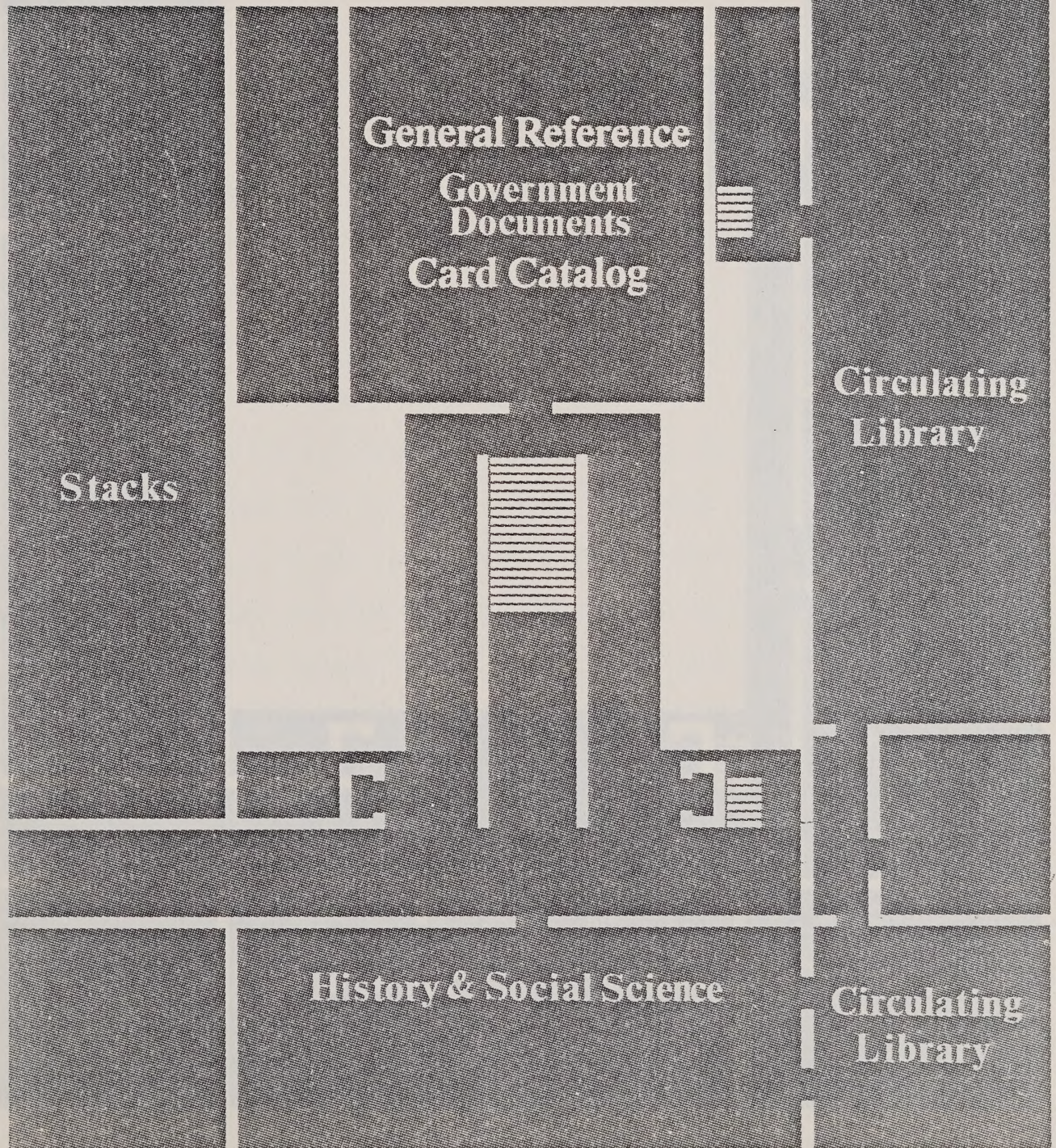
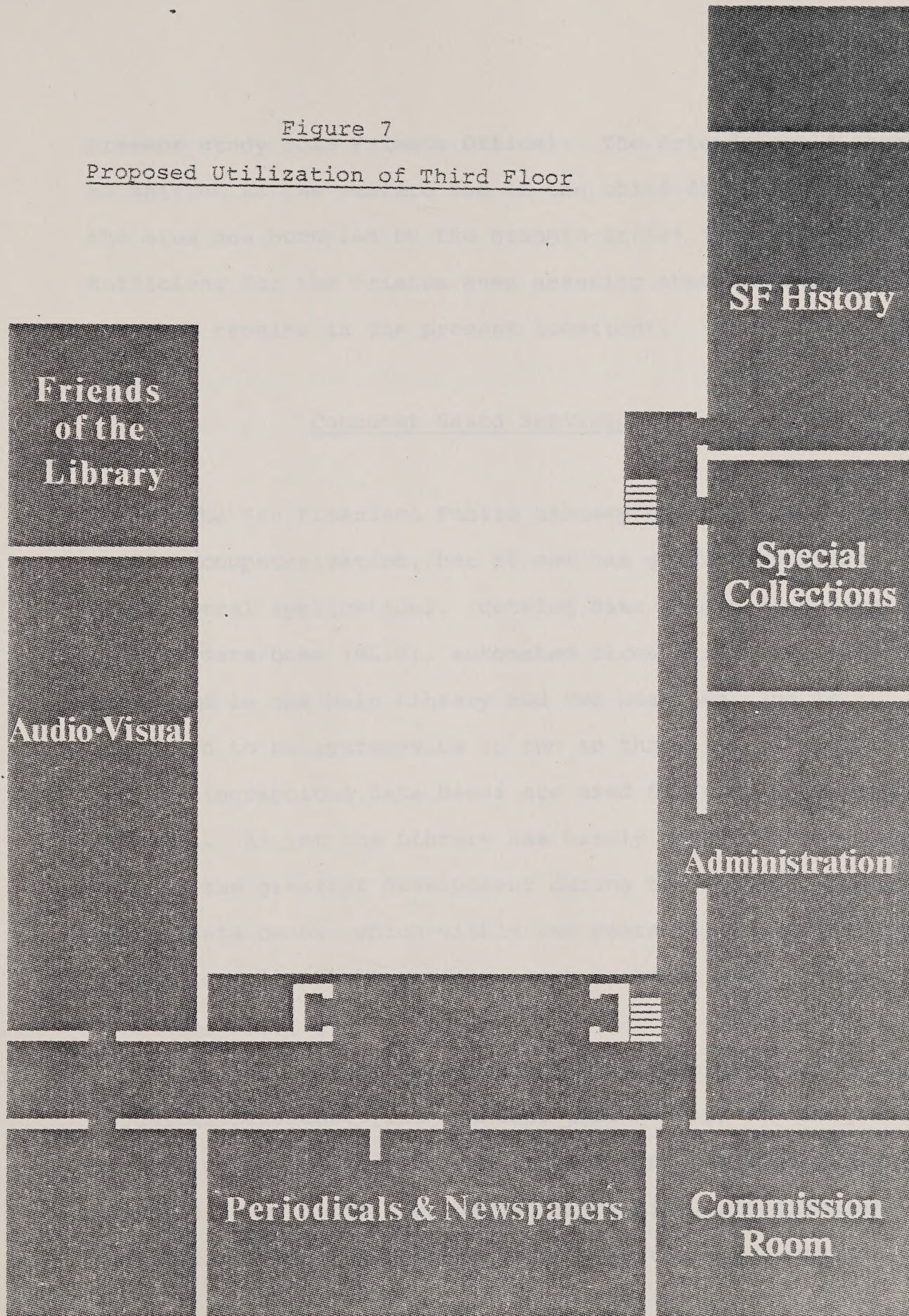


Figure 7

Proposed Utilization of Third Floor



present study (Old Friends Office). The Friends could then be shifted to the eastern end of the third-floor wing, into the area now occupied by the graphic artist (the space is sufficient for the Friends even assuming that the Chief of Branches remains in the present location).

Computer Based Services

The San Francisco Public Library has been slow to utilize computerization, but it now has gained experience with several applications. Catalog data is obtained from a central data base (RLIN), automated circulation has been installed in the Main Library and two branches, and is scheduled to be system-wide in two to three years (CLSI), and bibliographical data bases are used for complex literature searches. As yet the Library has hardly ventured into what will be the greatest development during the 1980's -- information data bases, which within ten years will have reception terminals in remote locations, such as homes and offices.

Use of computerization is moving step-by-step in the Technical Services. The eventual goal here is an integrated system, covering ordering and acquisition, cataloging, physical preparation of books, periodical processing, and circulation and registration. One of the most important products of this

total system will be the complete catalog of holdings in computer form, with consultation to occur at terminals in all departments of the Main Library and in all branches. At present only parts or pieces of the online system for Technical Services are in existence. The challenge of the next years will be to add the missing pieces and to interconnect all the piece-meal sections into an integrated system.

Bibliographic data bases are already consulted by the Library, which constitutes a definite step forward in service to users. On the other hand, the large and growing realm of information data bases has only been entered. The two are sometimes confused, so for future planning it is important to note the difference.

Bibliographical data bases help to do what libraries have traditionally done by means of printed bibliographies and indexes: they identify where, in the regular collection, the searcher can go to find what is sought. Information data bases, on the other hand, do not send the searcher to a source on the shelves; they are the source, directly providing individuals with what they came to get. The first serve like bibliographies, the second like reference collections.

Information data bases will never replace the whole library. But in the next ten years they will provide more and more current interest, governmental, business, financial, technical, scientific, biographical and cultural data (encyclopedias are already in this form). Here is the wave of the future. Even as the present automated bibliographic sources are now utilized 10-15 times a day in the San Francisco Public Library, for sophisticated searches for citations, so automated information sources will be consulted literally a hundred times a day by 1990 in each department of the Library, for both routine and complex data. The terminal at the elbow of the reference librarian will be as essential as the terminal at the elbow of the travel agent or the bank teller, except that the librarian will be drawing on a vastly wider range of information.

That is, this will occur if the Library can find its place in the new information environment.

Information data bases will proliferate in the next ten years, even as bibliographic bases have proliferated in the past decade (SFPL now has access to 190 of the latter). They will be accessible in offices and in many homes by means of (a) cable television, (b) telephone lines, or (c) online terminals, or a combination of these. Major communication

businesses (American Telephone and Telegraph, for example) are currently moving aggressively into the field.

With this commercial development in prospect, what place is there for the public library?

The situation that is likely to emerge will not be too different from that which prevails today for printed materials. People buy books and magazines, yet there is a place for the library, to provide that which people do not buy for themselves, whether for lack of money or for lack of knowledge of where they can acquire what they seek. Some individuals will have access to terminals in home or office, and will subscribe to some data bases, even as they now buy some books or subscribe to some magazines. Others will lack this access and will seek out libraries. Those who do have access will not subscribe to all possible sources but only to those of immediate use to them, and they too will turn to libraries just as they do now for publications not on their own shelves. In other words, the function of the library in providing a collection for all will remain.

Additional factors may favor the Library as a source of computerized information. As people come to depend increasingly on individual commercial sources, they will question

their balance and bias. The Library will provide more than one data base in a given field, even as it now provides more than one book on a topic, so that the inquirer can check and compare. Further, the Library itself may be the source of automated records. The catalog of holdings -- which in time should be in machine-readable form -- is an information source which some individuals will want to consult at home, in the office, or in a school. The Library already compiles information about civic, cultural and community organizations, which could be made available for commercial distribution (i.e., by telephone or cable).

In any case, the San Francisco Public Library should build into its Ten-Year Plan a growing component of automated information provision. If it does, this service will expand in the next period, coming to take its place with the provision of knowledge in print form. In fact, working out the balance between the two -- building up data bases for what they do best and retaining printed sources for what they do best -- will be one of the exciting challenges of library service in these next years. If SFPL holds back on information provision from computerized sources, it will miss the opportunity to take a definite step forward, and in time will not be able to acquire sources to handle the questions that come to it. According to the individual who guided OCLC into its

present position in centralized computer cataloging delivery, "Libraries are about to take off into an enlarged realm of information provision -- a take off that computerization will fuel." (Frederick G. Kilgour, "Future of Library Computerization," in Alex Ladenson, ed., Current Trends in Library Automation, Urban Libraries Council, 1981, p. 99).

Here is where the remaining portion of the branch saving should go. Computerized information service will have to go through an initial period of planning, development and demonstration. The money will be available for this from the restructured branch system. Then by 1985 additional funds will become necessary if this emerging arm of the Library is to grow strong.

Recommendations

1. The San Francisco Public Library should establish a high-level Computerized Service Planning Office, headed by an individual who combines background in library methodology with experience in computer applications and electronic transmission of data. The concern of this unit will extend from the order-cataloging-circulation complex (Technical Services) to the growing area of information storage and communication (Public Services). This officer will direct

planning for new developments in computer applications, and will oversee the divisions of the Library where computerization plays a central role. Only by elevating this growing aspect of library service to a place in the central management group will it develop to its full potential in the next years.

2. In the technical services the initial area that should be focused on is extension of automation to the ordering and acquisition process. This will complete the triad from ordering to cataloging to circulation. The three should be integrated in order to produce records that apply through the whole process rather than having each operate separately. Experience in other libraries has shown that application of computerization to acquisition is more complicated than one would anticipate; some libraries have started and then abandoned automation of this part of their work. Careful planning will be necessary, and in the interval SFPL has a fairly simple manual system for ordering that can stand until a new system is fully designed and tested.

3. In public services, the area that should be focused on first is computerized control, access and transmission of data for government, business and labor. Government -- the city government of San Francisco -- is a suggested starting

point. The City is already acquiring machine-readable data in some divisions and offices. A city-wide decision will have to be made as to central responsibility for this, and the Public Library -- as the information agency of the City -- is the logical candidate. The Library already utilizes an array of bibliographical data bases and some information data bases, and it has both experience and some equipment for the purpose. With proper development the Library could within a few years become the information source for planning and decision-making within government. The information provided would be from outside sources into municipal offices, and also among municipal offices, sharing data of joint concern. But the possibilities do not stop there. Government has a responsibility to share information with the public. Here again the Library is already in the business, gathering data about city affairs, organizing it, and making it available to inquirers. A two-way street could be maintained, with specialized information flowing from government to the people. In time this would be organized and available by means of the cable television channel that has been designated for the Library.

The business-labor component should be developed at the same time. Financial, marketing, production, regulatory, technical and employment information are increasingly coming

online. Following immediately after should be utilization of data bases in science and in cultural fields. In time the present card catalog of the Library will be available in machine-readable form. By 1985 the Library should have entered these various fields and be in position to expand them in the latter half of the decade.

4. Automated information provision should be thought of as a transmission system as much as a collecting system. Once the Library has access to the needed data bases, access can be provided not just in one location but also in most Main departments and in the branches, both Community Library Centers and Neighborhood Branches. With the system in place, all that is needed is terminals in outlets, with a wire connecting them to the Data Center. Further, the Library must prepare for distribution of information directly to homes, offices, and schools, using its designated cable television channel for the purpose.

Computerized resources will assist librarians in their traditional roles as organizers of knowledge, as reference personnel and as literature searchers, and will project them into new roles as publishers, editors and distributors of information.

Administrative Organization

The top administrative structure of the Library reflects a typical management pattern that combines line, staff and coordination officers. Their authority and responsibilities intermix but sometimes do not intermesh. Furthermore, it is a structure that places an undue load on one individual, the City Librarian, who must be the leader, the final arbiter, the inside coordinator and the external relations officer. Planning (where are we going?) and evaluation (how well are we doing?) tends to get submerged in day-to-day decisions. Finally, this management structure is better at keeping an enterprise on course (assuming a clear goal has been set) than it is for moving into new waters.

In this situation a common adjustment is to insert a deputy or assistant director into the mix. The top officer delegates part of his responsibilities to a deputy, usually all or much of internal management. This leaves the head free to plan, to lead, to maintain outside contacts. However, it splits the agency; no one individual has the whole of the library in his head and hand. Further, it introduces a distinct new level in the administrative structure, further separating management from worker. Finally, it does not appear to suit the style of the present City Librarian, who

is the type who "likes to know what is going on." The San Francisco Public Library is not that large -- there are fifty public libraries in the country serving larger populations -- as to require this extra level.

What SFPL does need is a compact general management group suited to the goals and priorities of the next decade. In essence these are the restructuring of public services and the development of computerized record-keeping and information provision.

Recommendations

Under the City Librarian there should be set up three high-level management positions as follows:

Chief of Public Services

- Main Library
- Branches
- Children's Service

Chief of Computerized Services

- Technical Services
- Information Services

Business Manager

- Accounting
- Personnel
- Maintenance

The City Librarian would direct and coordinate the work of the Library through these three officers and he would serve as executive and "secretary" to the Library Commission. He would handle external relations with city government and with the various business, civic and cultural interests of San Francisco. And he would devote a definite part of his time and attention to planning -- in a general ten-year framework, in definite goals and objectives for a five-year period, and over a shorter span in the preparation of annual budgets.

The three officers under the City Librarian would direct and coordinate their respective responsibilities, including an element of continuing evaluation to determine what is being accomplished. They too must devote a portion of their time to planning, particularly the person in the position of Chief of Computerized Services.

The three officers are not an increase in number over the existing general line officers, who at present are the

Chief of Main, the Chief of Branches and the Secretary. Under the three there would be middle managers and coordinators responsible for the divisions and functions listed above. For some of these positions the Librarian IV level, recently proposed, would be appropriate.

Judicious selection of appointees for these various positions, from among present staff and from the outside where the requisite qualifications do not exist in the present group, would serve to rejuvenate the top management of the Library.

Financing the Plan of Development

The financial strategy on which this whole proposal is built rests on four legs:

1. Continued support for 1982-85 from the City at a level which will maintain the present floor, and which will, in addition, keep up with inflation, which hopefully has abated somewhat. This does not assume any substantial increases, but it does assume a continued commitment by the City to library service as one component in its maintenance of both economic and community vitality.

2. Freeing of some money by means of restructuring the branch system, in order to buttress the Main Library and get moving on computer applications.

3. Shifting some supplemental service and activities partially to private funds, not to change the public library into a private library but to share costs of certain specialized services with those who gain most from the specialty.

4. By 1985, when the Library should be moving again, additional public money (local and/or state) on the grounds that the agency has come to perform an information function which is essential and which therefore merits some increase in priority among public services.

A further word is in order about the prospects of private funds. The day of very large individual endowments is probably past, but there is a pride among San Franciscans for their City and there is recognition that public money is limited. Appeals for general support of the Library are likely to get little if any return -- the agency is looked on as a general service that should be maintained from public funds -- but appeals for particular and special purposes can tap the concerns of some individuals and groups. Here are a few possibilities:

- Support for staff costs of the San Francisco Room, which would be of interest to those involved in the history of the City -- \$65,000.

- Support for staff costs of Special Collections, which would be of interest to those involved in rare and fine books -- \$40,000.

- Extra cost of maintaining a separate Business Library, to cover rent and amounts for duplicating materials, which would be of interest to the business community -- \$100,000.

- Improvement in service to the Blind, to pay for a specially-qualified librarian and for local production of talking books -- \$45,000.

- Adequate housing for the Historical Children's Collection and assignment of a part-time staff member to have responsibility for the collection - \$25,000.

- Establishment of a substantial collection of children's recordings, along with a program to inform parents of recorded materials available and their value -- \$20,000.

These are not short-term projects but rather means of

continuing support for services that would continue and improve.

Other possibilities will emerge as experience is gained in contacting private financial sources. As was mentioned previously, the new service rooms proposed for the Main Library (large and attractive circulating collection, and a city-wide audio-visual unit) might attract donors for distinctive furnishing and equipment. Many of the responses to the question form distributed to users indicate a commitment to library service which could result in hard dollars, assuming that challenging projects were presented. The Friends of the Library have shown skill and effectiveness in this regard, and might well extend this part of their activities as well as sharing their expertise with selected individuals within the library staff. The amounts obtained will not bulk large in the Library's total budget, but they will serve to relieve pressure at selected points.

Goals, Objectives and Priorities

For the most part the goals of the San Francisco Public Library are vague and inconclusive. Purposes are assumed from, and reflect, the differing conceptions that individuals have of the "library." To some it is a research

agency, to others a formal study agency, to others a self-education agency, to others a cultural agency, and to still others an entertainment agency. These conceptions are pieced together to create a broad and fairly shallow service program, which tries to provide something for everybody.

No mission statement exists for the Library. So far as goals can be extracted from both written materials prepared by Main department heads, followed by interviews with them, they aim to build as extensive collections as possible, providing the whole range of publications, from specialized research resources to popular titles of the moment, and to help people seeking information and particular subject materials. So far as the goals of the branch librarians can be extracted from similar sources, they aim "to provide users with what they request"; responses from 26 branches used some variation on this phrase. What the people request, that is what the branch seeks to provide.

One result of vague goals is that specific objectives cannot be set. If one is unsure where he is heading, he is in no position to specify where he wants to be year by year. Department heads and branch librarians seldom if ever described their programs in terms of objectives to be achieved. When asked what they hoped to accomplish in the next period,

responses were in terms of more books or longer hours or other steps to restore the Library to its former level.

Lacking clear goals and objectives, librarians fall back on circulation as a measure of what they are doing. With this criteria in mind, they seek to give the people what is requested most frequently because this increases the figure for loans. But even here the objective is not clear, for if circulation alone were the measure they could push it markedly upward simply by providing comic books for children and pornography for adults or, at the very least, providing 25 or 50 copies of the titles most in demand instead of spreading money over a range of lesser-used items. Clearly some kind of goal is in operation, but it is not defined or articulated.

Another result of vague goals is that there is resistance to setting priorities. Having no clear purposes in mind, it is difficult to decide what is most important. Whatever functions are proposed for emphasis, some members of the staff and of the public have other services in mind, there is no standard by which to select among alternatives, so no decisions are reached. Thus an agency continues on its way although all agree that "something should be done."

The goals and objectives of the public library should not be too narrow or restricted. This has been a multi-purpose institution, and is likely to remain so. But the question must be faced or the Library will try to be all-inclusive, and will not succeed in this ambitious but unattainable goal. Wrestling with the question, the Advisory Committee to the present study came up with the following statement of priority:

"... to emphasize the educational-informational role of the Library for the broad range of non-specialists who have no other institution to turn to in their personal, business, civic and cultural lives."

This implies less emphasis on advanced research than at present, less emphasis on materials explicitly for students (which should be supplied by their schools and colleges) and less emphasis on the more ephemeral types of recreational publications (that is, romances, mysteries, adventure and similar materials widely available in paperback form).

This statement needs further work and clarification. Certainly any official pronouncement that the Library adopts also needs wider staff participation than could be reflected in a small advisory committee.

Recommendations

1. A Mission Statement to be prepared, stating in general terms the broad goals of the Library and the resources and service programs it will provide. The Statement should also describe scope and limits of services, the areas that the agency is not responsible for or that will be given low priority.

2. Following a general Mission Statement, a written Book Selection Policy should be developed, applying the agreed goals to the fundamental task of building collections. The adult selection statement compiled a few years ago, but never formally adopted, could be reviewed and revised for the purpose. An official juvenile selection policy already exists, but surprisingly some children's librarians in the field were not familiar with it.

Statements of this kind sometimes seem more theoretical than actual to librarians. But they can guide both new appointees seeking to understand their positions and seasoned workers facing unusual situations.

An example of a situation that needs review is the relation of the public libraries to the school libraries and

to students. School libraries in San Francisco have slipped back from a fairly good level -- many elementary school libraries are now operated by part-time clerks and volunteers -- and a further 25 percent in the allocation for school libraries has just been announced for the coming year. Children flock into branch libraries after school to do homework and to prepare reports and papers. Is this the purpose of the public library, or is it a function thrust upon it by the decline in school libraries -- is this function to displace the traditional role of juvenile departments of stimulating and guiding the reading of youngsters? There is no easy answer, because children need both. A few years ago an unsuccessful effort was made to work this out in a joint school library-public library committee. Times have now changed, the harsh realities are recognized on both sides, so that a renewed effort is worth trying. Participating in any joint planning should be top officials from both institutions, and any conclusions they reach should be adopted as policy by both the Board of Education and the Library Commission.

Hopefully the present report will result in a plan to which administration and staff can commit themselves. This is necessary for the short run, but what sustains the troops in the long run is a sense of purpose, which should be clarified and enunciated. A plan of action gets the column

moving; a shared goal is necessary for the long march.

The several groups with vital concern for the SFPL -- the Mayor, the Library Commission, the Library administration, the staff, the Friends, the users -- need to get their act together. They have been a house divided, pulling in different directions, without common objectives and strategy. Here is a rallying point, this plan or some modification of it, where the ideals and ambitions of all can be combined to make for progress.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON METHOD

In preparing this Report, multiple approaches and resources have been used to gain an understanding of San Francisco and of its Library.

1980 Census data, reports of the Planning Commission and of the Redevelopment Agency, and periodic bulletins of SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association) helped to identify the general character and the problems of the City. Two meetings with the Mayor set the financial parameters and the political realities within which a library plan must be developed. Almost daily contact was maintained with the City Librarian and regular contact with the Library Commission.

Library statistics were assembled and analyzed in order to show trends in use in the various divisions, and trends in revenues and expenditures. Expenditures were broken down to the point of per-use and per-circulation costs in each department and branch.

Visits were made to each branch library and each community in the City. The availability of material on the shelves for readers was determined on these visits. Also determined

were the walking times between nearby branches, and the travel time by bus from remote locations.

Several channels were used to gain the views of people. A 1977-78 report on library needs, based on a poll of 8,000 residents, provided basic information (Library Services in San Francisco: Citizen Usage and Attitudes). This was supplemented and updated in early 1982 by question forms answered by 1200 library users, asking them to select among alternative approaches to limitations on funds for library service. In the branch-library visits, discussions were held with local users and community leaders who were assembled by the branch librarians. Groups with special interests -- for business service, for service to the Blind -- were consulted.

An Advisory Committee was established, composed of general officers of the Library, members elected by the staff, two members of the Librarians Guild, two members of the Friends, the President of Keep Libraries Alive, one representative of the Library Commission, and a representative from the Mayor's office. The group held six half-day meetings, covering topics from goals and priorities to the details of branch and Main Library service structure.

The staff cooperated at all points, filling out forms, taking time for interviews, and writing up their own ideas for progress. Many members of the group were motivated by the possibility of a Plan that would merit their support.

The whole process got underway on the initiative of the Friends of the Library, which organization found the funds for the study. Members of the Friends participated in the planning activity without in any way dominating the proceedings. This group deserves a special word of gratitude for whatever results are achieved.

The whole process could not have been completed without the contribution of an able research associate. Jane Ritter displayed judgment, initiative, perseverance and insight in assembling and analyzing data, contacting people and sources, and seeing the final report through to printing and binding.

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